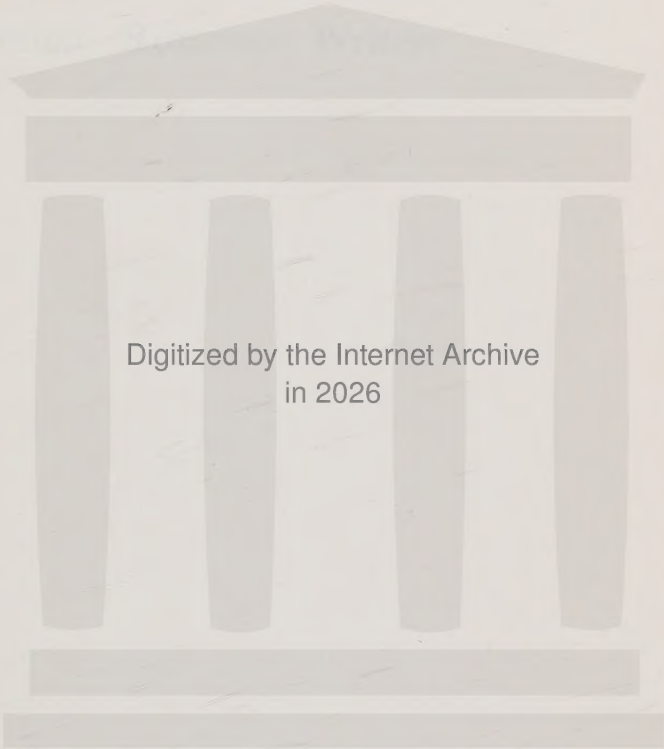
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Italian Romance Writers

WORKS BY

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Some Early Printers and their Colophons

The Fallen God
and Other Essays in Literature, Music, and Art : Illustrated

Italian Romance Writers

La Femme dans le Roman Italien—Les Confessions d'un Octogénaire
[Two Conferences delivered in French at the Sorbonne, Paris]

Entro un Cerchio di Ferro
[Romance in Italian]

La Paura del Ridicolo
[Romance in Italian]

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JOSEPH SPENCER KENNARD

ITALIAN ROMANCE WRITERS

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

An attempt to retrace modern romance through story, tale, fable, epic, ballad, and legend to its earliest *origines* in the dawn of civilization is outside the purpose of this work.

No early prototype of modern novel.

Indeed, from the earliest imaginative narrative down to the tales of *Daphnis and Chloe* and of the *Golden Ass,* there was no real prototype of our novel. Doubtless the romance of the European Middle Ages, with its stories of chivalry and tales of love and adventure, was foreshadowed by the Greek and Latin epics. Those stories of the wanderings of Ulysses and of Æneas, of the siege of Troy, and of the search for the Golden Fleece. Doubtless also the *Milesian Tales,* recounting chiefly love in its grosser form, were the precedents of the Italian *novelle* and French *fabliaux* and *chansons de geste.*

The Latin *Apollonius of Tyre* was undoubtedly derived from a lost Greek original of perhaps the third century, and presents one of the earliest love stories we can assign to that literature; and we know that the *Æthiopica* of Heliodorus of Emesa was not only widely read

Influence of "Æthiopica" and "Daphnis and Chloe."

and imitated through the whole Byzantine period, but exerted an influence on the French romance writers of the seventeenth century. So too the *Daphnis and Chloe* of the Greek sophist, Longus, was the model of the *Diana* of Montemayor, of the *Sireine* of Honoré d'Urfé, and found its echo in the *Paul et Virginie* of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre.

Such stories and the *Golden Ass* of Lucian, or that other of Apuleius, and the *Satiræ* of Petronius, and such early Christian tales as *Paul and Thekla,* and *Cyprian and Justina,* and the ascetic novel, *Euphrosyne,* all give in rude form that mixture of truth and fiction which is one of the elements of romance; but the difference between these narratives and the modern novel is measureless.

The mediæval romance.

Centuries nearer to our own time appeared the mediæval romance. Here we have the Arthurian Cycle, with its wonderful Round Table stories, and affecting Quest of the Grail romances. And the Franco-Teutonic Charlemagne Cycle, with its *Chanson de Roland, Fierabras, Reali di Francia,* and *Ogier le Danois.* And the Spanish Cycle, where the deeds of the heroic Cid inspired the *Amadis de Gaula,* full of splendid adventures, and with many passages of beauty and tenderness, and the *Palmerin de Oliva,* written, perhaps, by a woman.

Yet between these tales and the modern novel

there is not merely dissimilarity of technique, of language, of style, but a difference of conception. Even the *contes,* tales, or *novelle* of Rutebeuf, Chaucer, and Boccaccio, lack the characteristic trait of our modern *roman,* novel, or *romanzo.*

All early romance was objective.

Some are occupied with rescues of maidens imprisoned in towers, some with fierce slaughter on fields of battle. Many describe the cruel martyrdoms bravely borne by early Christians. They are all concerned with objective man: they are tales of deeds done. But no effort is made to reveal either the motives for actions or the personality of their writers.

Another large category of these tales is filled with more or less gross descriptions of love. The same adventures happening to the same personages: the husband, wife, and lover, are repeated again and again with more or less cleverness, with more or less gaiety, but few other aspects of social life are presented, few other founts of emotion are opened. The veil that hides each heart from all others is not lifted. We know little more about Chaucer and Marguerite de Navarre after having read their tales than before. They are purposely reticent.

Story-telling a popular pastime.

Story-telling was the pastime of Italian princes. No courtier was considered accomplished unless, like Chaucer's Squire, he "could well endite." Baldassarre da Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano,* a handbook of the necessary accom-

plishments of a gentleman of the sixteenth century, mentions this favourite art. In France a king's sister, Marguerite de Navarre, vied with her valet, Bonaventure Desperriers, in composing love stories. The gay "clerks" beyond the Alps, priests, princes, and courtiers, and the poorest of the common people, all were entertained by the merry tale.

Early novelists were purely objective.

The writers of the thirteenth to the fifteenth century were objective even in that most subjective form of composition, the "Memoirs." We seek in vain in Montluc, La Noue, or Coligny for a suggestion of the inner soul. Even Benvenuto Cellini, who described his adventures with such charming *brio*, and a precision and relief that his pen seems to have borrowed from his chisel, yet fails to reveal his heart. Although Matteo Bandello in Italy, and Brantôme in France, added a characteristic of the modern novel, by mingling with the conventional adventures of lovers much observation, yet, both author and reader were only interested in what the hero did.

Not profound but vivid is Brantôme's tableau of court life; more savoury are the *novelle* of the Lombard Abbot, Bandello, and truly accurate is his reconstruction of the historical moment.

Dante's "Vita Nuova," Boccaccio's "Fiammetta" not appreciated.

It is true that Dante's *Vita Nuova* and Boccaccio's *Fiammetta*, masterpieces of fiction and of psychological observation, were two unprecedented efforts toward a new art, and did indeed

foreshadow the modern novel in this rendering of reality. But they were not appreciated. The more tragic beauties of *La Divina Commedia,* and the wittier tales of the Decameron, were better known, more praised, than these first two romances. No one imitated them.

Modern novel originated in France.

It is in France, early in the seventeenth century, that the modern novel was born. There the social life was centralized in the royal court, which dictated the code of manners and ruled the fashion of clothes, moods, and languages for all the kingdom. This centralization influenced the development of all the arts, especially of such a courtly accomplishment as story-telling.

Society must become self-conscious before it can be mirrored in a literary work. This it began to attain in France during the brilliant reign of Francis I. Peace and prosperity attracted to the royal palaces the flower of the witty and polite *noblesse.*

That which political divisions and unsettled conditions prevented the Italians from realizing in their own country the Italian spirit accomplished in France. The *belles et honnêtes dames,* the *preux chevaliers* who, meeting in the atmosphere of court life, found leisure to analyze their own feelings and to sharpen each others' wit, soon realized those necessary conditions for the birth of romance that were denied in Italy.

When, in 1608, Honoré d'Urfé wrote the first

modern French romance, the leader of fashion, the umpire of *bel esprit* was an Italian, the Marquise de Rambouillet. In her drawing-rooms the *beau monde,* on coming from the Italian theatre, found a reproduction of Italian manners.

"Astrée" first modern French romance.

In this atmosphere, pregnant with Italian spirit, *Astrée,* an imitation of Tasso's and Sannazzaro's pastorals, was first read.

Yet if *Astrée* had only been a variation of *Aminta* or *Arcadia* it would not have outlived its models and would not have been imitated. These shepherds and shepherdesses and their love-making along the picturesque banks of the "Lignon" are different from their predecessors. They are living persons, not shadows. They exhibit such observation, such insight into motives, that *L'Astrée* is really the first modern romance.

Pastoral life and customs are here transcriptions of court life, nymphs and shepherds are people who meet and chat and charmingly analyze their feelings, whose aim is to please and whose business is to make love. Theirs is the life of the *beaux esprits* and *precieuses* that sat for d'Urfé's models, and who are delighted to see their own figures moving in a picture of idealized adventures, enough resembling reality to be interesting, and enough embellished to satisfy their vanity. The formula of every romance was found.

Contains the essentials of modern novel.

Camus de Pontcarré in opposition wrote the

religious pastoral, *Palombe*. Le Roy de Comberville indicated a different path in his *Polexandre* (1632), of which the continuation, *La jeune Alcidiane*, was completed by Mademoiselle Gomez. These form a link between the genuine romance of chivalry and the heroic style. We still meet with giants and extravagant exploits, and the pirates and sea scenes have been suggested by Greek novels.

"Princesse de Clèves" first sentimental novel.

Madame de Lafayette, in her *Princesse de Clèves*, first described that sentimental struggle of love and duty, which afterward produced so many lachrymose novels. Scarron, in his *Roman Comique*, seizing the old satirical vein and imitating Molière's broad fun and penetrating observation, indicated another road. Bombastic Scudéry and La Calprenède, in works of appalling length, fed the craving for strong doses of gossip about great persons and ample description of high life. *La Précieuse* (1656), by De Pure, and *Marcarise* (1664), by Hedelin, and the mystical romances of the Jesuit Ceriziers, belong to the same school.

By this time the love element has become the ruling passion; the dragons, enchanted castles, and giants are absent. And, finally, such works as Boisguilbert's *Marie Stuart* (1675), and *Nouvelles d'Elisabeth* (1680), were the connecting link between the romance of De Scudéry and

the modern historical novel which appeared during the eighteenth century.

La Bruyère's "Characters" abounds in accurate observation.

These performances would not have lifted romance far above story-telling, had not the works of a few superior writers who were not novelists, taught habits of introspection and of self-criticism. Such was La Bruyère. His *Characters* abound in delicate observations of human emotion. He shows the importance of trifles, and how character is indicated in apparently insignificant actions. He has not the philosophy of Rochefoucauld, he cannot resume in one short sentence a sweeping view of human frailty and egoism, but, better than the sceptical Duke, he observes and analyzes and traces a series of portraits unsurpassed.

Literary reproduction attains with him the precision of a science and shares its limitations. Hence La Bruyère cannot paint the things he has not himself seen; his imagination cannot complete his tableau by a description of country life, so he omits it.

Poets like Racine blended the manners of court life with the expression of tragical passions; others, like Molière, saw varied aspects of the human mind; philosophers and moralists like Pascal and La Rochefoucauld trained language to precision of expression, and witty lords and ladies composed jewels of familiar description or

exquisite pictures of court life, like those of Madame de Sévigné.

Eighteenth century endowed novel with power.

All this power for investigation of the motives of human actions, and for rendering the result of their observations in clear and elegant style, had been attained by French writers even before the end of the seventeenth century. Yet the French novel was only at the beginning of its brilliant career; the eighteenth century, with its impulsiveness, its thirst for political and philosophical reforms, led it from peaceful paths astray, but endowed it with a power which it has never since lost.

Fontenelle, using it to smuggle in doses of science under the garlands of gallantry, has in his *La Pluralité des Mondes* given a pattern since too often imitated. Marivaux, in his pretty sketches of customs, *Marianne* and *Le Paysan Parvenu,* has produced a lifelike miniature which his imitators have not surpassed. Le Sage, with his limited episodes and few characters has, in *Gil Blas,* originated the realistic novel, and in his *Diable Boiteux* he gave a first satiric picture of customs.

Importance of "La Nouvelle Héloïse."

In the atmosphere of the impending revolution Montesquieu wrote *Les Lettres Persanes,* Voltaire his *Candide,* Diderot his *Religieuse,* and Rousseau his *Nouvelle Héloïse.* The importance of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* in the history of modern romance can hardly be overstated; it appealed to

the best and to the worst tendencies of a woman's heart, and transformed her ideals, thus changing the social relations of the sexes. Rousseau's sentimental, much injured, charmingly sinful heroine, henceforth reigned in the world of fiction, and even now it is the shadow of that *vertueuse* Julie which still walks through the pages of many a sentimental story. We are still under her charm, though sensuous, reckless Manon Lescaut disputes the first rank.

Early English romance was feeble.

The *origines* of modern Italian fiction owe little to the English romance existing prior to the eighteenth century. The stage monopolized the chief forces of imaginative narration during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, and Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia,* which appeared in 1590, is the most brilliant English prose fiction prior to the seventeenth century. The succeeding hundred years were filled with imitations, translations, and adaptations from the Italian and French. Last of the "old-style" English romances is *Parthenissa* (1665), by Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery.

With *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Defoe inaugurated the English tale which aimed at appearing to be a truthful narration of facts. In the fulness of time Richardson published his *Pamela* (1740), and *Clarissa Harlowe* (1749), and Fielding produced his immortal character creation, *Tom Jones* (1749), in which war is de-

cared against meanness, hypocrisy, and every ungenerous emotion. At once there was a splendid reaction from the flood of Scudéry and Calprenède which, through translation, inundated England.

Doubtless before Richardson there had been English novels with descriptions of character. In the *Spectator* there are many such delicate studies. Doubtless there had been novels with a plot. Yet is it true that the middle-aged, decorous printer Richardson produced in *Pamela* the first English novel of manners: a story constructed of incidents within the probabilities of ordinary life.

Richardson's "Pamela" first English novel of manners.

Richardson led the way into a new literary field, and the masterpieces of Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne were produced before his death in 1761. And when was added in Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), the idyllic side of the life of the Protestant village pastor, England had not only shaken herself free from the trammels of French classicism and French romanticism alike, but offered examples of the modern novel which were copied and imitated in France and Italy. This influence upon foreign literatures would have been greater had it not been for certain insular limitations characteristic of all these writers.

Insular limitations of English novel.

For, though some, like Fielding the aristocrat, recall and continue the jovial recklessness of the

Restoration, and others, like Richardson the plebeian, are in line with Fox, Bunyan, and Defoe, yet whether Whig or Tory, non-conformist or churchman, they all accept the "Revolution compromise," and are possessed of the spirit of Bunyan, Baxter, and Burnet. They are a part of the religious and political constitution of the land they live in.

Italian novelists were unable to grasp this English concept. The habit of self-examination fostered by religion in Protestant countries, and repressed in Roman Catholic Italy, under unquestioned obedience to dogma, has accentuated the natural tendency which leads the Northern people to seek for beauty, justice, and happiness in an idealized world, and the Southern artist to trust to his own nerves for the elements of his pleasure.

Difference between English and Italian sentiment.

That undercurrent of religious feeling which is the substance of *Pilgrim's Progress*, that adds pathos to *Robinson Crusoe's* soliloquies and to *Adam Bede's* story, is seldom felt in Italian fiction. Even Manzoni's reliance on the final victory of good over evil, for being so outspoken and so limited to the case in hand, loses much of its impressiveness; and Fogazzaro's frank avowal of political clericalism impairs his power of convincing, and most other Italian writers either ignore the religious sentiment or merely suggest its consequences in daily life.

Italian novels lack that interpretation of nature which the great Lake poets have taught English readers to so highly appreciate, and to which not even D'Annunzio's poetical prose has attained.

With the English landscape painter every bit of scenery, though traced with pen and ink, is always *un état d'âme;* with an Italian artist it is a poetical transposition of sensations. The former strives to attain reality through the medium of his perception, the latter expects his nerves to reproduce the infinite variety of his sensations. But of all the differences between the English and the Italian literary spirit, the only one which implies a real inferiority in the Italian is the want of the delicate reticency which suggests more than it says. There is more suggested emotion in the *Vicar of Wakefield* than in any similar Italian picture.

Italians fail to appreciate English spirit.

The Italians are great artists, but they cannot poetically render and idealize simple home scenes by the addition of "that scene sublime," which Wordsworth feels impelling "all thinking things, all objects of all thoughts."

Yet though their temperament has prevented the Italians from appropriating the spirit of the English novel, they have borrowed the English form and method.

So preponderating was the influence of French and English romance in determining the char-

acter of the modern Italian novel, that other foreign literary influences may be disregarded. But we may not disregard the earlier Italian influence. *A priori* we should suppose that the modern Italian novel was simply the further evolution of an earlier Italian imaginative literature—the mature fruit on the native stem—and not some strange transplanting from French or English soil.

Early Italian influence on modern Italian novel.

That this was not so is due to several causes. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century Italy lacked that spontaneous national life, that youthful mind and heart, which is the source of imaginative inspiration, and which was characteristic of the other Latin races, as well as of the Teutonic people. And any impulse toward a literary renewal found an additional fetter in the tenacious clinging to the worn-out Latin tongue, which did not begin to release its hold until the thirteenth century.

Finally, though the poems of Jacapone of Todi and the St. Francis of Assisi legend, gave birth to a rich lyric literature, there was no nearer approach to romance than those faint reflections of French legendary literature, called the *Cento Novelle Antiche*.

With the fourteenth century began that golden period of Italian literature of which Dante is the chief glory, and in which Boccaccio's *Filocopo* appeared as the earliest example of Italian

"Filocapo" is earliest Italian prose romance.

prose romance. It was poor stuff, and not original. Boccaccio's next romance, *Fiammetta,* relates the author's love for Maria d'Aquino, the natural daughter of King Robert. It possesses merit sufficient to have made it the precursor of a literary revival; but it was sterile. The tales of Sacchetti and Pecorone were a return to less worthy standards.

Italian Renaissance produced no great novelist.

Remembering how that great intellectual movement, the Italian Renaissance, succeeded in reconciling classic models to modern feeling and stimulated the revival of Greek and Latin learning through all Europe; and how brilliant was its production of romantic and pastoral poetry in Italy; and that in Machiavelli and Guicciardini it produced the two chief originators of the science of history; it is strange that its novelists were so little worthy of mention that Grazzini and Bandello occupy first rank.

Literary decadence under Spanish rule.

Corrupted and oppressed by Spanish rule, the latter half of the sixteenth and all of the seventeenth century witnessed the decadence of Italian literature into mannerism, affectation, and bombast. The empty simplicity of the eighteenth century, with its "Academy of Arcadia," was not less depressing. Pretending to replace old conceits and insincerities by pastoral simplicity, the Arcadians only attained to languishing tenderness, sexless effeminacy, and wordy barrenness.

Classicism succeeded "Arcadia" and preceded modern novel.

But when, as in another creation, God said: "Let there be light!" and there was light; so in the fulness of time, the creative impulse brought forth in Italy a new patriotism and a new literature. As the eighteenth century drew to its close, inspired by the example of Parini into rejecting Petrarchism, *Secentismo,* and Arcadia, the way was opened for the epoch of the classicists, made illustrious by such dramatists and poets as Goldoni, Alfieri, Foscolo, and Monti, and which, when closed by Giordani, was to be succeeded by the Contemporary Period, which has been, and continues to be, the true period of the Italian novel.

The political events of the nineteenth century, which turned a mere *expression géographique* into a great and independent nation, were so closely associated with the revival of Italian letters, that the evolution of Italian fiction cannot be rightly understood without considering its relation to the political movement.

Importance to literature of Risorgimento.

Never in the world's history has the reciprocal influence of literature on political events been greater than during the Italian *Risorgimento.* Before it was translated into acts the Italian revolution had been willed by a few superior minds; before the necessity of shaking off the foreign yoke had been realized by the mass of the nation, its poets and its novelists, a small

élite, had dedicated their lives to enlightening and directing the movement.

Patriotism of early Italian novelists.

For these early Italian novelists were ardent patriots, and their fiction was the expression of their patriotic purpose rather than a mere literary production. Indeed many glowing pages were written in the intervals of campaigning, and sometimes in the dungeons of the Austrian oppressor.

The fact that this fiction was at once both the child and the parent of the Italian cry for freedom, both the product and the inspiration of the nation's revolt, cannot be too strongly emphasized. It is this interdependence of the political, social, and literary movements, and the results achieved, which gives to this Italian evolution its title to be considered one of the world's greatest evolutions. To understand the intimacy of this connection and its importance, it will be necessary to consider its origin and follow in its progress, this social and political transformation, and to discover the parallelism of the literary and political evolution.

Interdependence of political and literary movement.

The twin birth and simultaneous development of the national idea and of the novel at the dawn of 1800 are not the only evidence of their common origin. There is a likeness in almost all their features, even from the very first gropings of the classical spirit, striving to give utterance in *Jacopo Ortis* to feelings as yet so vague and

to dreams as yet so unrealizable, that nothing but poetry could translate them into words. This haziness of the classical novel, truly corresponds to the first glimmerings of a national conscience awakening into life under the lashing scourge of foreign tyranny.

When the dawn of 1800 shone on the wretched peninsula, Italian nationalism had reached its lowest depth. The many petty states were calloused by the weight of chains and happy in their humiliation. Dante's apostrophe, *Ahi! serva Italia, di dolore ostello!* had never been more sadly true, yet Italy was the gayest land in Europe, and strangers gathered to share in the perpetual carnival. This thoughtlessness was encouraged by foreign masters as well as by petty tyrants, mindful of the Juvenalian *panem et circenses.*

Stifling pall of pedantic scholarship.

A stifling pall of classic training was used to extinguish all liberal aspirations. Humanism, that inspiration of Italian genius during the Renaissance, was now frozen into a pedantic scholarship. In the schools was taught a fastidious taste and a strict observance of the purity of the language, thus hoping to shut out the flood of foreign philosophical and literary innovation. Neither progress nor obscurantism can always choose their weapons!

Napoleon's invasion overturned barriers.

The storms of Napoleon's invasion overturned these barriers, French philosophers vitalized

long-forgotten ideas, and for a while the words "Glory" and "Liberty" rang over all the land, and awakened sleepers. The reaction after the Congress of Vienna (1815), vainly strove to stem this tide. Priests vied with petty tyrants to preserve their flocks from French liberalism, but the current of ideas continued to cross the Alps, and Italians began to realize their present abjection, their future possibilities.

Romanticism the literary expression of rebellion.

It is only after the first blood had been shed in open rebellion in 1820, and after the national aspiration had attained to a better defined purpose, and only when Romanticism had provided a mode of expression for those dimly conceived, intensely felt desires, that the Italian novel took its rank among the other activities of the Italian mind.

A nation awakening into self-consciousness after centuries of oppression, would wish to know itself as others saw it. And the same phases of the national evolution that sent gallant hearts rushing to fields of battle, demanded prose works of fiction which would idealize and reflect this new Italian world. The Italian novel of the nineteenth century necessarily reflects the evolution of the modern Italian mind, and is the literary expression of the social and political life and aspiration of Italy during that century.

The momentous century which evolved the

Three periods in Italian romance. Italian nation and the Italian romance, divides into three periods, answering to three different series of events, directed by three different tendencies.

During the first period (1800-1820) Italy clung to the old classic ideal.

The second period (1821-1859), from the first struggles for liberty, the secret plottings, the unpremeditated outbreaks of patriotism, the blind groping after unrealizable ideals, represented the spirit of Romanticism which, blazing fiercely in the wars of 1848 and 1849, shot its last brilliant rays in the campaigns of Garibaldi, and in 1859 sank into the quiet waters of diplomacy.

After unity and independence had been achieved, came the third period—that of reorganization: the settling of the many problems, the many social and economical questions which other nations had been slowly solving through centuries of national life. This last period was eminently influenced by scientific, rationalistic, and socialistic ideals.

FIRST PERIOD

Napoleon's invasion changed Italy's destiny. French armies had long been fighting in northern Italy and French ideas had long been crossing the Alps when, in 1800, Napoleon himself came thundering in victorious warfare, bringing French revolutionary theories, sweeping away antiquated obstacles to the devel-

opment of thought. When, in 1805, Napoleon laid his hand on the iron crown of Theodolinda and repeated the antique formula, "*Dio me l'ha data, guai a chi la tocca*" (God has given it to me, woe to him who touches it), he was master of Italy.

Napoleon reveals idea of a United Italy.

Even before the conquest of Naples, in 1806, and before the surrender of Pius VII., he dominated all the land; not because his soldiers watched on the walls of every town and his jurists dictated the law to all the tribunals, but because he had perceived and partly achieved the destiny of Italy, uniting her into a vital whole, and because he divined her latent possibilities and stirred in Italy's sons the first sparks of that self-respect which makes men and nations great.

Italians then knew that they could become a nation, that they could win battles, that their trades and industries could blossom and fructify, that their intellectual and political life might be lifted out of its long stagnation. Italians learned to trust each other.

Had this union lasted a few more years, had the Italians truly realized what advantages Imperialism gave them, they might have sustained either one or the other of their French kings, Murat or Beauharnais, and when, in 1815, the empire collapsed, they might have resisted the decrees of the Congress of Vienna. But neither were there leaders, nor was there then a public

spirit ripe for self-government. Everywhere was hesitation, distrust, intrigue, or open quarrel. Italy, divided and oppressed, again became the prey of her former tyrants

Collapse of French power in Italy.

Victor Emanuele I. was recalled from Sardinia to reign over Piedmont and Genoa, and at once declared that the legislation of the last twenty years was void. French laws and institutions were repealed, the clergy and nobility resumed their ancient privileges. Feudalism and clericalism replaced civil liberty.

The Austrian widow of Napoleon received the States of Parma, Plaisance, and Guastalla. Francis IV. of Este ascended his throne of Modena, guarded by Austrian bayonets. Tuscany welcomed back the Lorenese archduke.

Former tyrants reinstated.

In Naples, Murat was crushed by the most unholy *Sainte Alliance,* deserted by his subjects, betrayed, and only happy in that he died a soldier's death. Ferdinand of Bourbon succeeded him on the throne of Naples, and when Sicily was annexed adopted the title of "King of the Two Sicilies." In Rome the Pope had returned, the rod of temporal power was once more laid on the back of a proud people, and was extended to Romagna and Ancona.

Milan, now the capital of Venetian Lombardy, was the residence of an Austrian Viceroy, who enforced with severity an oppressive code of political laws.

Yet so ignorant were the lower classes, so blinded by prejudice were the higher, that throughout Italy this restoration was hailed with rejoicing, though a few voices were raised in warning or lamentation. Well did the Austrian and the national tyrants understand, that their only serious danger lay in the awakening of the public intelligence, and the purpose of their policy was to quench the growing light. Yet nothing could destroy the IDEA, and the thought of liberty was a vital seed, growing in the secret meetings of *Carbonari*, and of other associations of patriots. In 1820, when the King of Spain granted a charter to his people, this smouldering fire leaped into flames both in Naples and Piedmont.

Lower classes welcome Austrian restoration.

The Neapolitans frightened their cowardly King into granting them a constitution, but it was beyond the power of man to make him keep his oath; and after twelve months the King's absolute power was reestablished by the intervention of Austrian soldiers.

The first rising in Piedmont was more conscious of its aim. The *Federati* wanted the charter as a means for declaring war against Austria. They had an understanding with their countrymen of Lombardy, and they wished Prince Carlo Alberto to take the lead.

King Victor Emanuele I., shrinking from civil war and unwilling to break his promise to the *Sainte Alliance,* abdicated in favour of his

Abdication of King Victor Emanuele.

Carlo Felice becomes king.

brother, Carlo Felice, then residing in Modena, Carlo Alberto being proclaimed regent during his absence. The liberals seized the opportunity and summoned the Prince Regent to keep his promise to grant a charter. Why Carlo Alberto complied, and then a few days later deserted those who trusted him, is hard to understand.

Santa Rosa was obliged to surrender the patriot army, 12,000 Austrian soldiers poured into Piedmont to support Carlo Felice, and a commission showered death sentences or life imprisonment on those suspected of participation in the movement.

In Austrian prisons and courts of justice Poerio, Borelli, Settembrini, Puoti, Silvio Pellico, Confalonieri, Maroncelli, Arese — poets, men of learning, the flower of intellectual youth, swayed by high ideals—suffered for liberty. Here were none of the practical aims that in other countries and in other times have roused a nation to rebellion. The Italian patriotism was fed on classical tradition, its leaders were scholars and poets.

SECOND PERIOD

Mazzini and Garibaldi inspired second period.

A romantic spirit presided over this second period, and is impersonated in its two beloved leaders, Giuseppe Mazzini and Giuseppe Garibaldi.

Like an intangible force, Mazzini's spirit

breathed valour into the most timid souls, and from his London garret his word ruled Italy. Despite police spies his soul-stirring messages spread over the land, appealing to ardent minds, and the flower of the nation rushed to torture and to death, for an ideal which no reflecting mind believed realizable.

First Italian martyrs to liberty.

Reckless, noble, and pure heroes of romance, were those first martyrs: Ciro Menotti, the Modenese, who in 1831 paid with his life for trusting in the promise of false Francis of Este. Heroes of romance those gallant youths who, in 1834, tried to penetrate into Savoy under the command of the Mazzinian Girolamo Ramorino, and numbered in their ranks the young volunteer Giuseppe Garibaldi. Knights of the Round Table those brothers Bandiera, who with a few companions attempted to land on the shore of Calabria, were betrayed into the hands of the Bourbon soldiers, and as they stood waiting to be shot, sang a patriotic chorus.

For an instant they appear on this bloody stage, then pass from view like some fair vision: these shadowy figures so closely resembling each other, so evidently the fruit of unreflecting but glorious patriotism. They always failed, but not in vain did they die. Nor fruitless was the long torment of those who went to a living death in Austrian dungeons. Each of these attempts compelled attention, stirred sympathy. Every

Spread of the "Idea."

day the IDEA spread farther, and the justice of the cause appeared more evident.

With these heroes of the field of battle fought those heroes of the pen, who ran an equal risk and displayed an equal courage. Italian unity had long been the dream of philosophers, poets, and scholars, and because it was ever present as an ideal in the thought of a few superior men, when the hour of destiny struck they were ready; and it became a reality. But for the efforts of this *élite,* Italy must have succumbed to such intolerable hardships.

In 1846 came the anomaly of a liberal Pope: Pius IX., who read Gioberti's *Primato degli Italiani,* and who seemed inclined to accept the Neo Guelph theory of a Federation of Italian States under the presidency of the Pope. The first acts of his pontificate made every heart throb with hope.

The revolution of 1848.

In 1848 the wind of rebellion then blowing over all Europe stirred the Milanese to revolt. On March 18th they rose in arms, and after five days' fighting they drove out the Austrian garrison.

The same day Venice shook off the Austrian dominion and proclaimed the Republic, and the Dukes of Modena and Lucca fled. King Carlo Alberto, who had granted the *Costituzione,* which is still extant, transforming this absolute into a constitutional monarchy, now raised the

banner of Italian independence, declared war against Austria, and called all Italians to join his standard. How brilliant was the beginning and how forlorn was the ending of this first war!

Failure due to discord.

Failure was principally due to discord; there was no leader able to grapple with and subdue rivalry and distrust. Carlo Alberto could not command confidence! Mazzini opposed the creation of a great kingdom! Venice tried to resist alone! Naples and Sicily did worse still! These divisions were fatal to the Italian cause.

When, in the following year, Carlo Alberto resumed the war the prospect was not bright. The Pope, who had promised to send troops under the command of General Durando, recalled them, protesting that as the "head of Christianity" he must equally love all his children and must not be a partisan. The brave volunteers from every part of Italy were no match for veteran soldiers.

Defeat of Novara ends disastrous campaign.

The short and disastrous campaign ended on the field of Novara. This defeat was the romantic close of this romantic war. The sun set on a day that witnessed many deeds of valour; dismal, dark, and damp the evening fell on fields strewn with wounded and dying, and sounding with groans of pain and imprecations against the chiefs.

Carlo Alberto, who had vainly sought death in battle, now sitting by the cold fireside of a deserted villa, summoning his officers and

Carlo Alberto abdicates. his two sons, declared that he must lay his heavy burden on the young shoulders of Victor Emanuele, his first-born. Thus parted in sorrow these two kings—the father to drag out his miserable existence, hoping only for consolation beyond the grave; the son to solve the most difficult problem that ever confronted a newly elected king.

Once more Italy was grasped and fettered by cruel hands. Twenty thousand Austrians occupied the country between the Po and the Ticino. Sicily submitted once more to the yoke of Ferdinand of Naples, Tuscany returned under the domination of the House of Lorraine, whilst a French corps, commanded by General Oudinot, occupied Rome to protect the Pope. Venice, after *Tyranny again triumphant.* enduring a long siege, surrendered. Once more tyranny stretched its dark pall over all Italy, and once more Italians began to plot and prepare for deliverance.

An appalling number of persons were sentenced to death or prison during these ten years! Yet relief was nigh! In 1850 Massimo d'Azeglio, Prime Minister of Piedmont, asked Count Camillo Cavour to enter the Cabinet. After giving liberal laws and economical reforms to Piedmont, Cavour boldly started on that far-sighted policy which, in 1855, sent a corps under the command of La Marmora to the

Crimea, and in 1856 at the Congress of Paris boldly propounded the Italian question.

All Italy throbbed with hopes, which the war of 1859 did not fully realize. Though it left Italy a free country, it failed to give her the limits "from the Alps to the sea" which had been promised her. A French garrison was in Rome and the Austrians remained in Venice.

Victor Emanuele first King of Italy.

On the 11th of March, 1860, Victor Emanuele was proclaimed King of Italy, and the heroic period of the Italian *Risorgimento,* the period which inspired the literary revival, was ended.

When Garibaldi's Thousand conquered the Two Sicilies, the political rôle that Italian writers played in the evolution of Italian society was finished, and they bravely faced the task which D'Azeglio thus resumed: *"L'Italia è fatta, facciamo gl'Italiani"* (Italy is made, we must make the Italians). It was a social and intellectual education which was now wanted.

"Spedizione dei Mille" was last heroic enterprise.

Poetry and romance had inspired that last and purest of heroic enterprises—the *Spedizione dei Mille.* All the poetry of mediæval battle, rushing valour, banners streaming against the sun above red shirts and youthful heads, a glorious evocation of the irresponsible days of chivalry, disappeared before the happy reality of firmly established power. Garibaldi was never greater than when he gave a kingdom to the coming king and taught poetic valour to bend with him the

knee to accepted legality. The era of romance was closed, a new era began; but it had yet to discover a new literary formula to give expression to different ideals.

THIRD PERIOD

When, on September 20, 1870, a breach was opened in the walls of Rome and the Italian troops took possession of the Eternal City, one of the most significant events in the world's history was enacted.

Significance of capture of Rome. To Italy it meant the fulfilment of cherished dreams, the realization of unity and independence, the end of oppression represented by a foreign garrison and temporal power, the beginning of a new era. Though neither the republican nor the Mazzinian, nor the remnants of the neo-Guelph and federalist parties were satisfied with this conclusion, they bowed to the wishes of the vast majority.

Discontent succeeds rejoicings. After a short period of rejoicings there was a reaction of disappointment and discontent. The new nation encountered distressing economical, social, and political difficulties. The great depreciation of paper money and of the nation's bonds, the depression of trade, led to financial panic and to gloomy forebodings.

The centralization of public administration, the suppression of many courts of justice and of other local offices, consequent upon this

transformation of many little states into one; the repeal of ancient laws and abolition of ancient customs, and the institution of a government on new lines, had to be achieved by Italian statesmen without guidance or encouragement from the mass, who neither knew nor cared to know either their duties or their privileges as free subjects of an independent kingdom.

Lower classes ignorant and unpatriotic.

Italians take most naturally to intrigue. And with their past experience of the benefit of secret societies in opposing the foreign invader, it was natural that this discontent should seek a remedy through secret societies. The Sicilian *Mafia,* the Neapolitan *Camorra,* as well as all the varied hues of internationalism and anarchy, are different expressions of the same feeling of revolt against unhappy circumstances.

As the hand of the Austrian oppressor had been as heavy on the aspirations of Italy for liberty in education as for liberty of government, the achievement of liberty aroused an almost passionate revival of every branch of learning. To a people so enamoured of intellectual pursuit, the scanty classical education doled out by Austrian regulations, and the deserting of university halls for fields of battle, aroused thirst of knowledge which was almost universal.

Revival of learning.

How this double current of the Italian evolution, the awakening of a whole people to political and social life, and the revival of a national

liberal education have influenced the development of the modern Italian romance, will be better perceived after reviewing the works of these novelists.

THE CLASSIC-ROMANTIC

Romanticism and Manzoni

Classic-romantic period of novel.

Alfieri, Niccolini, Foscolo, Manzoni first sang the name of "ITALY." Their voices called out in the silence of night. They aroused their countrymen to an ideal different from the enticements which in other countries and in other times have spurred people to revolt. They appealed to abstract emotions, they indicated poetical ideals. Hence the impracticality and the spiritual grandeur of their apostolate. Indeed, though these poets aroused a certain sentimental emotion throughout Italy, the practical result of their patriotic verse was small. It required a novel by Ugo Foscolo to arouse the nation—the *Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis,* a masterpiece unique in its double character of poetic prose and classical transposition of a romantic subject.

Ugo Foscolo's nature is of the purest Greek classicism in all his aptitudes, in all his characteristics, yet when charmed by Goethe's *Werther* he was tempted to imitate it; his reproduction is permeated with the passion for liberty that surged in his soul. When the *Letters of Jacopo Ortis* were published in 1798 the word "Roman-

ticism" had hardly been pronounced. Yet the approaching wave is felt in the sentimental story of the two lovers, though the purest classical eloquence has inspired the speeches of Jacopo Ortis.

Struggle of Romanticism against Classicism.

It is hard for a modern Italian and impossible for a foreigner, to realize how difficult was the task assumed by these first apostles of a national creed, how dangerous their undertaking, how uncertain the result. Against a bulwark of oppressive laws, of police spies, they could wield no weapon but the pen; only by the written or spoken word could they rouse to combat people so ignorant, and understanding hardly anything but their local dialect; and the Austrian *censura* watched, ever ready to strike out the line or the passage that spoke too clearly.

But the impulse of ideas is resistless—they must find expression! And thus in every corner of the persecuted country brave men bravely accomplished their task. Those who could wield a pen lent their assistance, and few having put their hand to the plough, were restrained by persecution. Everywhere patriotic intellectuality struggled against tyrannical obscurantism.

"La Biblioteca Italiana" and "Il Conciliatore."

The first phasis of this combat, the first literary skirmish, was the duel between Classicism and Romanticism fought at Milan by two champions: the periodicals *La Biblioteca Italiana* and *Il Conciliatore.*

"Romanticism" meant many things.

It is important to remember what was then in Italy understood by the word "Romanticism." No definition would cover all the interpretations which this ideal of art, "Romanticism," had assumed throughout Europe, according to the circumstances and the differences of intellectual advancement or political condition of the nations who adopted it. Romanticism, that newest expression of Beauty, could be sentimental, bombastic, coarse, or mystical; it could assume every garb, wear every disguise, without losing the characteristic trait by which it attracted dissatisfied and restless souls.

Italian Romanticism meant rebellion.

Romanticism meant rebellion! Rebellion against the yoke of classicism, rebellion against the narrow interpretation of religious dogma, rebellion against obsolete forms of government, and also rebellion against every antiquated custom, fashion, opinion, style of language, that did not answer to the new idea of Beauty. By this character of revolt Romanticism appealed to the Italian, rather than by its artistic or literary spirit.

When that untiring promotor of the *Romantique* school, Madame de Staël, visited Italy in 1806, in her genial *causeries* she scattered broadcast the principles of the doctrine she had already preached in Germany; and on returning to France she resumed in a *Discours* her opinions as to what the Italians then needed in order to

recover their literary supremacy. She blamed the narrowness of a purely Greek and Latin training, and suggested that, to compensate for that most necessary stimulant of the mind, social intercourse, Italians should appropriate this foreign intellectual movement. *Madame de Staël and Romanticism.*

This advice was resented by the classical writer, Pietro Giordani, but it suited the aspirations and the cravings of the national spirit, and was followed. Now Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, Condorcet, Rousseau, moulded the Italian mind with the authority of eloquence; Goethe, Shakespeare, Byron, and even Ossian, fired imaginations with the beauty of a poetry so different from the classical ideal; Chateaubriand, Alfred de Musset, Alfred de Vigny, Richardson, Walter Scott, Ann Radcliffe, translated, imitated, commented, discussed, were accepted *pêle-mêle,* and welcomed as the light-bearers of a new world.

"Romantic" and "Foreign" soon became equivalent terms, and both expressed opposition to the Austrian government; Romanticism being thus flaunted as a political banner by the liberal party in Milan, the Viceroy tried to conciliate the Milanese *amour propre,* and sent for some of the best-known men of letters, and proposed to give them financial and moral assistance in the publishing of a literary periodical. *"Romantic" and "Foreign" equivalent terms.*

The avowed program of this *Biblioteca Italiana* was to defend the purity of the Italian lan-

Program of "Biblioteca Italiana."

guage and the integrity of Italian art from the contamination of foreign influence—to support classicism. The real intent of its viceroyal protector was to control the literary movement and to use the review as a means for bribing, threatening, or persuading the popular writers to reconcile their countrymen to their bondage. Ugo Foscolo saw the danger, and declined the directorship; Silvio Pellico, Pietro Giordani, Vincenzo Monti, Confalonieri, and several others who had at first promised to contribute critical and literary essays, perceiving the snare, withdrew from the *Biblioteca* and founded another periodical, *Il Conciliatore,* with a romantic national program.

A twelvemonth later the *Conciliatore* was suppressed; two years after the whole staff was sentenced to death or *carcere duro.*

This anomaly of a review, paid and supervised by the foreign master to defend classicism and purity of language, whilst a group of liberals, devoted to the Italian cause, were trying to arouse their countrymen to the currents of foreign thought, is typical of the political and literary confusion of the time.

Meaning of word "Romanticism."

It is true that "Romanticism" is the term used in opposition to "Classicism," but we never meet with any definition of its meaning or any declaration of the real nature of the conflict, and still less do we find that its spirit is understood by

its champions. That the myths and images of mythology belong to a classical art, and that the pomp and pageantry of the Roman Church (as idealized in Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*) are romantic ingredients, was taken for granted.

That evocation of mediæval uncouthness, chivalrous feelings, and mystic dreams, a display of obsolete terms and of old-fashioned style are pertinent to "Romanticism" is also vaguely understood, but of the fundamental theory that CONTRAST is the essence of beauty nothing is said.

Manzoni gave the masterpiece of Italian Romanticism and also the clearest definition of its theory. Though his *Lettre sur l'unité* produced no such sensation as Victor Hugo's *Préface de Cromwell,* it is equally a profession of faith. If it attracted little attention beyond the *litterati* it is owing to the unpreparedness of public opinion.

Manzoni's novel reflects the Italian spirit.

It was a piece of rare good luck that a superiorly gifted mind, in all the humbleness of real genius, trying to tell a simple story and impart a moral lesson, has unconsciously become a faithful mirror of the moment. Indeed, the spirit of the nation is reproduced in Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* better than in the more accentuated and bombastic writings of his contemporaries. It is the first ripening into words of budding aspirations, unripe ideas, undiscussed thoughts, which

no other literary performance but a work of imagination could have detected and expressed; more true, indeed, to the reality than the florid heroism or lachrymose sentimentalism of others.

The passive endurance of oppression which Manzoni has interpreted was then more general than Italians nowadays like to admit. It jars with the pride of successful assertion, yet *The Betrothed* truly represented the national conscience of that period.

Manzoni accurately reflected the popular conception of life's great problems and their solution. No one then expected events to follow any logical sequence. Don Rodrigo, dying by direct interposition of that Divine Will whose secret laws Manzoni presumes to interpret, was more "natural," than that he should meet the same awful death as the result of his debauchery.

Manzoni's influence over his contemporaries.

Alessandro Manzoni was the fixed star into whose orbit other planets were attracted; the gentleness of his character, his diffidence, his love of repose—falsely called timidity—made his supremacy acceptable, and many submitted to the ascendency of the writer for the love and reverence they bore to the man.

Grossi accepted his guidance, D'Azeglio his advice, Giovanni Berchet was a daily visitor at his house; Domenico Romagnosi, the deepest sociologist of his time, Antonio Rosmini, the opponent of the Jesuits, and other poets and phi-

losophers, formed the Milanese group which welcomed the first Italian romance.

Manzoni's *Sacred Hymns,* and other poems, added to his authority, and he actively guided and directed his friends and enlightened the public conscience. Tommaso Grossi's *Marco Visconti,* D'Azeglio's *Ettore Fieramosca* and *Niccolò de' Lapi,* like Rossini's, Cantù's, Carrer's, and Guerrazzi's most popular historic novels, are closely imitated from the *Promessi Sposi* and exaggerate its defects.

Once every Italian novelist a Manzonian.

Once every Italian novelist was a Manzonian and sure to develop some trait of the master. Thus De Amicis inherited his debonnair objectivism, Salvatore Farina his humour, so peculiarly Italian; thus Rovetta, around a simple story of private adventures, casts his ample background, a picture of customs which, by calling all of a society to act in the plot, enlarges its meaning and adds to its interest; and Capranica, like his master, mixes the spice of historical information with his story of sentiment.

Romanticism is un-Italian.

Yet, notwithstanding the number of Manzonians and the value of their novels, has there ever been a really romantic school of fiction in Italy? The inspiration in this first period of conspiracy, of bombast, and of genuine patriotic exaltation, which has been ridiculed under the name of *Quarantottate* (things of forty-eight), is doubtless a romantic political spirit. And it has

been fruitful of grand deeds, and produced those great men Mazzini, Garibaldi, and all the host of martyrs to the Italian cause. Their ideas, and ideals, and deeds, are proudly remembered.

Romanticism produced only one masterpiece.

But it produced no literary masterpiece other than *Promessi Sposi*. So evidently exotic, so uncongenial to the classic Italian soil has Romanticism proved, that when the circumstances that had favoured its growth were removed, the hothouse blossom withered away, leaving no fruitful seed behind. When the heroic "Thousand" had conquered the Two Sicilies, when the romantic hero Garibaldi "had handed the conquered kingdom to the late-coming King," then romance ceased to rule over Italy. Sober diplomacy, regular armies, and a strong national government accomplished the realization of the long-cherished dream.

Nievo's great novel.

Le Confessioni d'un Ottuagenario, Ippolito Nievo's great novel, doubtless belongs to this romantic period both in date of composition and also in character. But in the intervening thirty years Italian thought and national life have progressed so far, and this book so greatly differs from the work of Manzoni and his disciples, it has in it so much of modernity, that Nievo demands consideration apart from the Manzonians.

This last of the romanticists went to his untimely grave after painting, in the grandest

historical picture of his times, the evolution which had turned the old-fashioned, much-divided Italian world into a compact modern society, after fighting the last heroic and poetic campaign, the last of those enterprises which smacked enough of adventure to add attraction to their undiscussed lawfulness; and with his exit the curtain drops over Italian Romanticism; another literary ideal, another vision of beauty, was to rise out of a new society.

Manzoni and Nievo represent different ideals.

The similarities and the contrasts in their personality and their romances, and the fact that they and their books are so much greater than their contemporaries, will always tempt to comparisons between Manzoni and Nievo, between *I Promessi Sposi* and *Le Confessioni d'un Ottuagenario*. They are the alpha and omega of the romantic period. Both Manzoni and Nievo were patriots, yet while one shunned the turmoil of life and avoided the clash of arms at every cost, the other sought a soldier's death on many a battle-field and only took up the pen when unable to wield the sword.

One author lived to see his novel an abounding success, and in a good old age received the homage of his countrymen. The life of the other went out in the flush of youth; his novel was not published until after his death, and only now is receiving tardy recognition of its greatness. Manzoni built up his characters and arranged

his events so that they should illustrate a moral thesis. Nievo allows his personages and events freely to develop with apparent incoherence, but with those strictly logical sequences which experience proves to be the law of real life.

Manzoni preached religion of submission.

Each represented genuine but different phases of religious life. In *The Betrothed,* the religion which typifies submission echoed the national sentiment of the time. But later there came to Italians a patriotism which embraced many religious characteristics. Contemporary documents are full of it: the joyful death of the Bandieras, the mystic faith of the Mazzinians, the blind obedience, the self-denial, the close communion as of partakers of the same creed, the *scrupule de conscience* which allowed not one thought, not one desire, in contradiction to the sacred aim—all these are religious traits.

In this spirit Nievo wrote. Here tangible causes are followed by logical results. Temperament, environment, hereditary tendencies determine character. The vital principle which effects the social evolution is within that society. Unlike Manzoni, Nievo does not presume to codify this law of the universe in a fixed verbal formula, though he suggests the philosophical principle.

Nievo's religion represents immutable order.

In Nievo this seizing upon a new and philosophical conception of justice, this shifting of the moral standpoint, is especially interesting because it is almost unconscious. He does not seem to

realize the importance of his innovation. He uses the same words as Manzoni, but their meaning has changed. He still speaks of Providence, of the Will of God, and all the time he is thinking of the inseparable link between cause and effect, which will bring about the events he is narrating.

Without possessing Manzoni's vast historical learning Nievo handles the facts of history with a better appreciation of their synthetic importance. Without attempting to force from them an arbitrary interpretation, he is content, with patient observation, to reproduce the immutable order, in all its usable and knowable integrity.

Exit of romantic novel.

Thus the romantic novel, chiefly derived from French and English sources and held together by a newly roused patriotism, passed from the scene when that patriotic desire had been attained. Shadowy and fantastical, like the spirit that informed it, the Italian romantic novel realized the apparent paradox that it was true as a representation of a psychic moment in proportion as it was false as the reproduction of a national temperament.

Realistic novel comes from France.

Finally from France came a new literary dogma, a new type of novel, and Italy welcomed the new model and in time passed from imitation to originality in its use.

When Professor Guerrini, under the *nom de plume* of Lorenzo Stecchetti, published a small

Excitement caused by Guerrini's realistic poems.

volume of poems, their crude realism was attacked and defended with a verbal violence alien to Italian traditions. The disputants started from false premises, both in considering this realism a new dogma and in supposing it un-Italian, whilst it had been the basis of Italian art and literature for centuries. Instead of realism being now for the first time faithfully represented, it was only a new aspect of reality, a new method of observation which was now practised.

As the traveller, perceiving some new aspect of the landscape, forgets his former surprises and raptures, and imagines that this last view is the most beautiful, even so do new ideals of beauty, new aspects of truth, cause us to forget the old ideals, the old aspects which may have been equally beautiful, equally true.

Italian realism came at psychological moment.

If only it comes at the right moment and is presented by a clever writer, a new literary doctrine is sure to arouse attention. Now realism in Italy came at the moment of greatest national despondency. A period of uncertainty, of depression, of political dissatisfaction, of social discontent, succeeded the romantic and heroic stage of the Italian evolution, and Naturalism was welcomed as a contrast to exploded Romanticism, and was heralded by Zola's clamourous success.

So dazzled were the Italian writers by this newly proclaimed theory, that the Frenchman's assertion of having lighted a new lamp

was unquestioned. Yet acquaintance with the old masters of the pen, the brush, and the chisel would have shown that realistic observation had always been characteristic of old Italian arts. How could realism be considered a novelty in the country of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci? Has the anatomy of the human body, the play of its every muscle, ever been rendered with more accuracy? Could Donatello have exhibited such marvelous foreshortenings, had he not been saturated with technical knowledge?

Realism an Italian characteristic.

And in Italian literature there has always been a tendency to direct observation and the faithful rendering of life. Who is more powerfully, more modernly realist than Dante in many passages of his *Divina Commedia?* In his less known *Canzoni della Pietra* he is as crude as any modern writer.

Realism of Dante.

Che nei biondi capegli
Che amor per consumarmi increspa e dora
Metterei man e saziere'mi allora.

(In the fair hair that love for my torment has crisped and gilded I would thrust my hand and sate my desire.)

Then having thus grasped the fair prey from morn till night, he would not spare her—

Anzi farei come orso quando scherza.

(I would do like a bear at play.)

There is realism in Boccaccio, and some pas-

sages in Ariosto, such as Orlando's madness, are models of observation.

Mannerism is alien to Italian mind.

Mannerism and conventionalism is so alien to the Italian mind that even during the misleading periods of "Petrarchism" and "Arcadia" there was a strong reactionary current. Every genuine artist demands truth, but every genuine artist demands more than truth; hence in Italy, when the balance leaned on one side someone was sure to put it straight by a pull in the other direction.

Even in those days there were "realists."

Thus Berni, with crude wit, counterbalanced the subtlety of some writers of the *Cinquecento,* whilst prose writers, like Benvenuto Cellini in his *Life,* traced pictures of common life and described rough manners and adventures with a poignancy and spirit which modern effort cannot surpass. Baldassarre da Castiglione, though he lived at court and dictated the law to courtiers, yet wrote with such accuracy that Herbert Spencer borrows from him the definition of "gracefulness." "Arcadia" had, in 1700, threatened to pervert the taste of a society distorted already by *cicisbeism* and *rococo,* but a sane conception of the realities of life so inspired Parini's verse and armed the Italian Addison, Gaspare Gozzi, with so sharp a whip of satire, that affectation soon made way for the realism of Goldoni's plays.

How with all these historical realistic precedents, the critics could imagine Guerrini's book to

be a new discovery in art, is inexplicable. Soon a host of juvenile poets, profiting by the sensational violence of polemic about this new dogma, flooded the country with unripe and short-lived attempts at realistic poetry.

Theory of "Realism" was sound.

Realism, or, as it was then termed, Naturalism, in prose works of fiction lived a longer life and brighter. Sincerity of observation and of rendering are such essential features of romance, that excess was scarcely a fault.

The theory that scientific methods should be applied to works of fiction was sound; the difficulty was to properly combine this element of realism with that of ideality and poetic sentiment, which differentiated an artistic creation from a book of science. Italians possess both the delicacy and the sense of beauty that, combined with accurate investigation and representation, would have supplied the needed formula. But unfortunately they worshipped the idols of the stranger. Verga's stories and those of Matilde Serao and of other writers show the effect of this inconsiderate deference for the French pattern.

For a Parisian *blasé* public, eager for novelty, surfeited with two centuries of every sort of fiction, Zola's first novels answered to a demand and revived an old standard of art. Italian readers, however, unsurfeited with prose fiction, did not require stimulants to sharpen jaded appetites.

But they did lack an appropriate expression for this new-born romance, and for the complex sentiments that a new life had not yet made familiar. "Truth for its own sake" was the vaunted formula which they borrowed from the French. But in fact their volumes exhibit only an imitation of life which, whether true or false beyond the Alps, was certainly not Italian truth. Reality is far more complex, far more beautiful and noble, than those first naturalistic novelists suspected.

Early French Realists study only sexuality.

A very shallow stream of science went a long way with these Frenchified realist writers, and a rickety scaffolding of observation upheld their theses. Unfortunately this observation was limited to one aspect of human nature. After proclaiming themselves the apostles of a new science, the pioneers of a higher art, they circumscribed the range of their studies to the sexual appetite, which they insisted is the instinct which controls humanity. The anatomy of man's body and soul was reduced to a single function; the endless variety of human tempers was crudely summed up as diversity of temperament. All the cravings, feelings, and affections which did not directly or indirectly depend upon the organs of reproduction were either ignored or forced into the single classification.

The method was bad; yet, by enlarging the novelist's field of action, it prepared for the trans-

formation of the realistic into the psychological novel. By extending deductive reasoning to intellectual phenomena, by grounding speculative assertion on proven premises, the realist became the psychologist, and his fiction, from the crude and incomplete representation of the brute in the man, evolved into a comprehensive interpretation of his whole being and of his possibilities.

The realistic novelist becomes a psychologist.

If we accept Hippolyte Taine's saying that "a novel is like the confession of a society," we find that the naturalistic or realistic novel is the confession of a careless penitent, who has only examined his conscience in reference to the Seventh Commandment, whilst the psychological novel is the enumeration of the sins committed by a self-observant and intellectual person who knows himself, though he has not yet been graced with any desire of reforming.

Naturalism lived a short and inglorious life in the Italian novel, but it did valuable service by providing its successor, the psychological romance, with this vivifying dogma: the necessity of grounding fiction on truth. All those early Italian champions of naturalism have finally achieved their evolution, and are now writing psychological novels. A step at a time, the long way has been covered, and it is almost possible to know the date of an Italian novel by observing the proportion of realism or of psychology, of art or of science.

Naturalistic novel evolved psychological novel.

These novelists have not recanted, but have enlarged their method of investigation; and they have added the personal element, the characteristic trait, which realism banished when it tried to make of the artist an insensible camera.

The novel influences national life.

Thus it happens that the novel, once considered the most insignificant form of literature, now occupies the foremost place in letters, and is an important factor in the national life. After having been a cause of the intellectual growth of a people, it now appears as the most complex and adequate representation of our self-observant, highly evolved modern society. It is an ample stage whereon the flitting and endlessly varied aspects of life can all be represented, it is the forum whereon every stirring question is discussed.

Here the pressure of society on individual, the reciprocal influence of each mind on the mass, can be felt. The writers who try to guide the public spirit have enlarged their own perceptions in this communion, and have been rewarded by an increased power of comprehension, by a clearer insight into the dark enigma of social problems.

Thus De Amicis, after having in time of need stirred patriotic and military sentiment under the pressure of altered circumstances, now strives to promote social justice. De Roberto too, from studying individual types, has attained to the investigation of great life problems. Rovetta dis-

covers Italian traits in characters which seem cosmopolitan and conventional. Capuana, examining the relations of physiological to psychic phenomena, shows how both are to be studied.

Individualism the keynote of Italian character.

Individualism is the keynote of the Italian character and of the Italian novel. There is a great inequality of culture between various sections of the peninsula, and the Italian impulse is to encourage the evolution of the individual rather than to consider the integral interest of society. This tendency is reflected in that mirror of the nation—its fiction.

Among Italians there exists no common tradition of teaching, no levelling discipline to force varieties of temperament into a common mould. The instinct of an Italian is to assert his individuality. His dream is of personality.

Originality, independence, facility are the gifts that every Italian most values. In every branch of art and of letters Italians have shown originality and sentiment rather than evinced the solid preparation that bespeaks patient toil and observance of tradition. When Romanticism and political passion inspired the novel, the revolt against precedent was less strong; but since quiet and purely literary ideas prevail, it is daily growing stronger. Thus those Italian writers who once imitated Zola or Bourget, now attempt new forms of art, which are certainly more congenial because freely selected.

Literary revolt against precedent.

Matilde Serao's evolution. When, for instance, Matilde Serao wrote her first books, she was a Zola echo even to his mannerisms—repetition of the same adjective affixed to the same noun, and an affected poverty of synonyms. In some of her novels she imitates Bourget. But with the growth of her powers she renounces imitation, and in *Suor Giovanna della Croce* shows her untrammelled originality, her natural aptitudes, her artistic temperament. We observe the same thing when D'Annunzio, after a short trespass into the field of naturalism, obtains a personal conception of his art. But the greatest progress was achieved when Verga's Sicilian pictures were fully understood by critics and indicated as models.

End of French influence. The preponderating influence of French writers no longer exists. Tolstoi, with his sympathy for the humble, and profound knowledge of sources of human emotion, and of the origin and consequences of human deeds; Dostoievsky, with his penetrating psychology of criminals, appeal to responsive feelings. Maeterlinck and Rodenbach are admired; Ibsen answers some of the questions which are tormenting thinkers as well as poets; Nietzsche's theories have been discussed and have exerted an undoubted influence; Rod's individualism; Huysman's mysticism have found imitators. No new formula of philosophy, no new ideal of fiction has passed unnoticed; everything has been discussed and seldom totally rejected. This ca-

pacity for assimilation has enriched the Italian mind with the spoils of the world.

Italian intellectual life is decentralized.

Another reason for diversity in the Italian novel is that the intellectual life is decentralized. If any Italian city could arrogate that position of supreme intellectual authority that Paris exerts over France, and London over England, it must have acted as a limitation of this individualism; whilst the division of literary courts of justice, which makes appeal from one to the other so easy, is its encouragement. The novel or the play that has succeeded in Turin or Milan may fail in Florence or Rome, but the author need not despair of obtaining appreciation in other cities.

Regionalism influences Italian novel.

Regionalism also produces a similar effect. Though all over the peninsula there is a broadening sentiment of solidarity fostered by the communion of interest and enforced contact, though the obligation of serving together in the same regiments, of mixing in the pursuits of trade and industry, in the university halls, in the state offices, have smoothed many of the outward distinctions of language, habits, and manners between different parts of the land, yet many essential differences still distinguish the inhabitants of the several Italian regions. These characteristic diversities are reflected in Italian fiction.

The square-headed, long-limbed, fair-haired descendants of Goths and Longobards in the North have, through centuries of warlike strug-

gles against foreign invaders, developed the industry and endurance which, under the bracing influence of mountain land and harsh climate, make the Piedmontese and Lombards the most prosperous and strongest of Italian people. Since strong natures are privileged to harbour delicate dreams and foster high idealities, impressive counterpart of their unimaginative daily activity; we find that the most inspired poets, nearly all the Romanticists, belong to the North. Manzoni and his friends, De Amicis, Fogazzaro, have the traits common to their land; their observation is deep rather than quick, they suggest more than they express, their inner life is stronger than their artistic cleverness. Their reticence is eloquent.

North Italians naturally "Romanticists."

The Tuscans, witty, clever, indolent, but refined by centuries of artistic training; have inherited the shrewdness and glibness of their trader princes. They possess elegance of speech, but lack that capacity for comprehending ideals which is the punishment of nations and men who have not suffered. The Tuscans can boast of few very superior minds, but their critical discernment is so widely acknowledged that the sanction of Florentine critics is the hope of all writers.

Naples and Sicily have a population of mixed descent, inheriting from Greek ancestors acuteness and artistic tendency, and from Oriental

Neapolitan and Sicilian novelists are "Realists."

ancestors indolence and fatalism. These, encouraged by the enervating climate and by bondage, have fettered activity and stifled conscience. They have not, however, impaired the love for poetry and emotion.

Surrounded by most marvellous beauty, the Neapolitan has developed his capacity for the enjoyment of sensuous pleasure. His misery has made him callous to the cravings of the soul, but he finds compensation in the joy of living. His reason and his conscience are seldom aroused, but his perceptions are quick—so quick that they stifle self-criticism, and do not admit of that *repliement sur soi-même* which breeds delicate scruples in daily life and searching psychology in works of art.

French and Italian "realism" differ.

In the representative arts these Southrons turn to realism; not the gloomy, crude, pitiless realism of the French school, but a sanguine, vivid reproduction of life, such as may be seen in Michetti's or Morelli's pictures. In works of fiction Verga best reveals this healthy disposition because he has kept free from foreign imitation. Serenely objective, yet warmly sympathizing with the things he describes, he instils life and suggests a pantheistic spirit of love.

Italian fiction individualistic.

Besides these three great divisions of Northern, Central, and Southern Italy, there are still lingering many peculiarities of customs that make each region divisable into quaint corners, almost

unexplored by literary descripiton. From many of these out-of-the-world nooks some clever or loving artist has sprung to sketch the typical aspect, the distinctive trait of his native place.

Thus Signora Grazia Deledda pens powerful pictures of Sardinian life; thus Caterina Pigorini Beri has delineated the simple-minded mountaineers of the *Marche,* and Neri Tanfucio has reproduced the simple customs of the Tuscan peasantry. These different founts of inspiration, these widely different subjects for observation, and, above all, these divers temperaments in the writers, have acted as impediments to the development of any uniform type which we may label "the Italian comedy" or "the Italian novel"; because both these sorts of composition are simply mirrors of well-understood types of society.

No "typical" Italian novel exists.

This personal interpretation of these differently civilized regions is the great attraction of Italian novels. It is all so fresh and unexpected.

Besides this natural tendency, other causes tend to make Italian fiction individualistic.

Difficulty in understanding Italian novel.

The Italian novel, though inspired by the world's thought, stimulated by the expansion of the nation's social life, and enriched by the development of its language, would yet have failed of its mission had it not contained a philosophy and a moral purpose. To understand this philosophy and judge of this morality is difficult for a for-

eigner, prejudiced by education and temperament, and largely ignorant of the soul of the race whose literature he attempts to criticize.

In a different way it will be equally difficult for the Italian to accurately apportion praise and blame. He will be sanguine in his appreciation, and will lack a sense of the relative value of his native romance compared with that foreign fiction whose spirit he can only partially understand.

Characteristics of Italian psychology.

Yet, since in all lands the realistic novel has evolved into psychological fiction, it is necessary to consider the characteristics of this Italian psychology and in what it differs from that of other countries.

Word "psychology" variously interpreted.

This word "psychology"; how differently it is understood by persons of the same race, and how much greater the difference when used by people of dissimilar stock! Scholars will agree as to the scientific formula, but writers and readers of novels—critics too—may be worlds apart in their understanding of the term. Certes if the frequent repetition of a word proved its popularity, then is "psychology" the first of all the sciences and the most familiar. But, alas! it is rather flaunted as a banner by both critics and novelists than deeply meditated.

Thirty years ago physiology was the fad that ruled fiction. Most novels reeked with crude pathological stuff. What heterogeneous rubbish was comprised under this pretence of docu-

mented observation! What coarseness, what filth, what immorality have been uttered in novels and called science! Surely no physiologist or psychologist would consent that his science should be judged by the application of it in such novels! In Italy this difference between science as taught in books and its application to literature is accentuated, and for a reason peculiar to the country.

Science of psychology is un-Italian.

The science of psychology is a foreign importation, and Teutonic rather than Italian is its genius. Before it is truly acclimatized, it requires to be completed by much genuine Italian observation.

The Italian student whose sole knowledge of psychology is derived from text-books of foreign inspiration, and who has memorized rather than assimilated the foreign argument, is expected, when he comes to psychologize in a novel purely Italian, to be judged by foreign standards, and yet to exhibit truly national qualities of observation and rendering. But in Italy the aptitude of the novelist and the character and environment of his people are so different from the aptitudes, character, and environment of the people who first applied psychology to fiction that their methods cannot be successful here.

The very basis of all psychological investigation, the physiological constitution and temperament, is different in Italians from the physio-

logical constitution and temperament of their Northern contemporaries.

Relation of psychology to physiology.

Since we cannot imagine a pure spirit, nor an intellectual movement apart from organic phenomena, psychology cannot be considered apart from physiology. Psychic activity, soul, divine afflatus—whatever definition we may give to these words—certainly it has never been revealed apart from nervous and cerebral phenomena. An individual purely physiological or purely psychological does not exist, though for purpose of investigation we may abstract the one from the other. Psychical and physiological activity still keeps its secret as to the synchronism of their unquestioned affinity.

All the differences between the dolichocephalic and brachistocephalic Northern and Southern races, multiplied by all the differentiating influences of climate, intermixture of races, customs, conditions of life, have stamped with varying character the different races of Europe. A comparison between the stories of nations shows us an infinite number of contrasting causes, accentuating through many centuries the initial divergence. What idiosyncrasies of temperament! What dissimilar nervous reaction!

Italians are violent and sensual

Italians are gifted—or afflicted—with an impulsivity which leaves no time for conscious thought, no strength for interference of will, which sometimes makes a hero and sometimes a

coward or criminal. It has also produced the two most objectionable traits of the Italian character: violence and sensualism. Italians are oversexed and over-ready with their weapons. These two tendencies, in greater or less proportion, are among the leading motives of an Italian's actions, and often a controlling element in his feelings.

Complexity of a nation's psychology.

To further understand the Italian psyche, we must consider how these individuals, so differently constituted from their Northern neighbours, have been moulded by their environment.

Man is the product of an infinite series of causes, a being moulded by many forces, each infinitely small atomy has left some trace of its passage—a tiny furrow, an added atomy. The number and variety of these influences is increased as the number of individuals increases, which, considered together, form a society or nation. The psychology of a nation is therefore more complex than the psychology of an individual, and requires much information as to its history, biology, and economy. Religion and myth, customs and language are principal factors of social psychology—activities which control its evolution.

Psychological influence of language.

As language is necessary to abstract reasoning and as a social bond, language is the first psychological relation between human creatures. As an instrument of thought, its evolution is parallel with that of the species, and is a measure

of the psychic development of a nation. Doubtless an exhaustive study of the story of the Italian language, descending from its Greek and Latin originals, would assist in the reconstruction of the modern Italian character.

Religion a factor in nation's psychology.

Religion and myth are factors of national psychology. At first merely attempts to explain natural phenomena and to give them an anthropomorphite representation, they are at the basis of psychic activity, of our conception of the universe and of man, of science and of philosophy. The evolution of the myths and religion of Italy shows the divergence between the Italian and Anglo-Saxon genius. From the hospitality granted by ancient Rome to the gods of every conquered nation to the easily accepted downfall of the temporal power of Roman Catholicism, how many examples of tolerance or of indifference!

Characteristic religious indifference.

In Italy no popular movement which betrays the soul of a whole people can be traced to a purely religious motive as can the Reformation in Germany. No popular leader has owed his authority wholly to religion: Francis of Assisi appealed to a poetic pantheism, and Savonarola represented an ethical ideal and a political principle.

All this sceptical tolerance and this semi-pagan worship of Beauty in its many aspects comes to

Superstition and irreligion Italian tendencies.

the modern Italian as a tendency. In the higher classes this tendency is to accept scientific positivism, and, in the lowest, the tendency is to superstition. The customs of the people, all the relations between society and its members, have also had their place in the Italian psychological evolution.

When, therefore, an Anglo-Saxon critic strives to understand the Italian psychic activity, he should disabuse his own mind of all the preconceived ideas which a different physiological constitution, divergencies of race, and difference of training have raised between them. All the elements which account for the peculiar character of the Italian fiction also account for the difficulty of an accurate alien criticism of that fiction. Since the Anglo-Saxon necessarily lacks qualities essential to the entire comprehension and appreciation both of the Italian character and of its reflection in Italian fiction.

This difference accounts for much of the so-called weakness of the Italian psychological novel.

Charm of Italian novel.

One of the greatest charms of the Italian novelist is that he neither preaches nor passes judgment on his characters. His arguments arise from the story itself. By reconstructing the moment, the time, the ruling passion, he suggests extenuating circumstances for a crime or inspires pity for the culprit, but he never revels in auto-

investigation. He entirely accepts Fouillée's maxim: *"C'est une question préjudicielle de toute morale, que de savoir s'il y a une morale."*

Are Italian novels immoral?

Hence the charge of immorality brought against such realistic novels as *Giacinta,* by Capuana, or *Giovanni Episcopo,* by D'Annunzio; and repeated against almost all psychological novels.

In a certain sense the charge is justified. Man exhibited as the victim of uncontrollable causes, an organism moulded by biological, physiological, and, social laws; his instincts predetermined by heredity and by the structure of his organs, his inclinations and potentialities shaped by his surroundings, his every act predetermined by heredity and environment, is, if not an immoral theory, at least bewildering, and contrary to all formally accepted traditions of good and evil.

Italian ideals opposed to traditional standards.

We must start anew with the pagan ideal of virtue—strength; and we must build a new standard of justice, grounded on the relations of man to man, or rather of the individual to the society he lives in. Rousseau, in his *Contrat Social,* foreshadowed this ideal of morality, and, to the great scandal of many good people, he declared that "the only duty of each individual is to promote the advantage of the community." This first proposition in the minds of our modern social reformers implies the second: "that society must be responsible for the condition of individuals."

Characteristics of Italian morality. In the relations between man and man, or, rather, in the reciprocal relations and duties of man and woman, the Italian moral standpoint is not that of the Anglo-Saxon or the Russian. This is shown in the Italian treatment of love in novels that assume to represent current opinion. Love and the dual emotions it rouses in the dual nature of humanity—the cravings of the flesh and the aspirations of the spirit—affords vast opportunity for investigating man under his double aspect of a physiological and a psychological subject.

The pictures of customs in Italian novels imply a tolerance for wrong-doing, a fatalist submission to the resistless passion, that rather resembles Greek obedience to Destiny, or of the Oriental to Allah, than a Christian interpretation of life's great problem. Centuries of religious teaching has not convinced Italians that they are free to choose between good and evil. Love in the Italian novel is the effect of physical sensation even with the pure and chaste, though the pleasure of the eye may afterwards develop into a sentiment.

Italian love is sensual.

Sometimes this sentiment does not come at all; then we have lovers like D'Annunzio's Aurispa and Ippolita, who hate each other, though they together drink deep the cup of passion. Ippolita is "the enemy" for the man who determines to die with her. In Rovetta's

novel, *Mater Dolorosa,* Lalla loves her husband, yet accepts a lover; Matilde Serao's *Ballerina* is a very slave of desire for a man who has never mentioned love to her; Neera's maidens are all swayed by fleshly instincts. Almost the only modern romance that shows love conquered in the struggle against duty, *Daniele Cortis,* is filled with personages who ridicule this virtue—pronounce it quixotic.

Italian novelists rarely ridicule or idealize love.

This sensual representation of Love is an altogether different thing from that peculiar form of French pornography which, by a mixture of wit and semblance of gaiety, has influenced many an Italian reader but almost no Italian novelist.

Passionate and lustful though the Italian may be, yet, like the Oriental of to-day and the Roman of the past, he instinctively veils the deeds of his intimacy. The object of his love, or lust, is not transfigured into an ethical figure, not worshipped with mystic incense, but kept jealously hidden from public view. In works of Italian fiction, love is sometimes tragical in its consequences; its origin and development are often investigated, but it is rarely either ridiculed or idealized. Neither coarseness nor mysticism are likely to greatly influence the evolution of Italian romance.

Italian conception of "remorse."

The difference between the Italian conscience and that of a man of the North may also be measured by the conception of remorse in the Italian psychological novel; where it is a sort of

nervous reaction, a physiological effect, rather than the reawakening of the soul. Compare Dostoievsky's *Raskolnikoff,* a complete representation of repentance in a Russian mind, and *Il Marchese di Roccaverdina,* by Capuana, the most accurate rendering of the same feeling in an Italian.

Remorse in a Russian novel.

Raskolnikoff's soul seeks punishment as a relief. Gradually his spirit rises beyond care for safety, repentance aspires from his soul, it overpowers physical instincts, nullifies exterior sensation, or transforms it into a mystical call. How memorable the scene with the lost woman, where these two flotsams of society, these two sinners, kneel side by side and pray! In their purified souls baser instincts have been destroyed.

Contrasted with remorse in an Italian novel.

Capuana's murderer, a sort of feudal Sicilian lord, has killed the husband he had given under certain conditions to his mistress. He is unrepentant, and allows an innocent man to be punished for the crime. But slowly phantoms rise. He hates the sight of the once-loved mistress. The scene of the crime is haunted. Public rejoicings and processions, words suddenly uttered, so agitate his excited nerves that, after a prolonged struggle with these physical weaknesses, his stubborn spirit is conquered and he dies insane.

The crime committed under an impulse of the senses has been punished by the destruction of the organ of sensation.

Economic and social conditions reflected in novel.

The economic and social conditions of the people are reflected in Italian novels. Pauperism, *brigantaggio,* continued emigration, anarchy, are too terribly real for one to ignore their existence and not look for their causes. Financial and social reforms are so imperative that the novelists are impelled to dwell on facts that should be widely known. Verga's descriptions of low life contain many pictures suggesting the necessity for reform; in De Amicis the preaching is undisguised, and, being mixed with sentimental episodes, appeals to the emotion rather than to the intellect; in Rovetta scenes of daily life assume importance when, by revealing some hidden social sore, they show the possibility of a social cataclysm; Neera's studies of woman's wrongs borrow a sadder pathos from the inference that they are but samples of hundreds of similar cases demanding relief.

Latent paganism of Italian nature.

Though Tolstoi's influence over these romance writers is unquestioned, they do not accept the Russian's mystical acceptation of grief as a heavenly decree. These Southrons are too hopeful, these descendants of the Romans are too enamoured of the beautiful, to accept a doctrine that considers sorrow as a regeneration.

An Italian will endure distress, and even make fun of his misery, but he does not pretend to submit willingly, he does not adore the hand that chastises him. Had Catholicism only shown that

face it would not have held out so long in classical Italy. Nor, with the exception of Fogazzaro, do Italian novelists try to persuade suffering humanity to patient endurance and saintly submission. They rather appeal to the latent paganism still surviving after centuries of Christian teachings, and now reviving under the influence of scientific thought and self-assertion.

Italian ideals. "Cult of Beauty."

Yet, since no literature can outlive the loss of all ideality, when positivism had destroyed the religious ideal, the unspoken craving for ideals urged Italians to discover some other object of worship, and D'Annunzio proclaimed the cult of BEAUTY. Thus from the pious Manzonian interpretation across the misty Romanticism of his disciples, through a period of exotic realism, to this poetic worship of sensuous Beauty, the Italian romance has accomplished an evolution. Its progress has been a curved line, enclosing the circle, and returning to the *Cinquecento* ideal.

Modern Italian novelist inherits spirit of Renaissance.

The modern novelist is heir of Leonardo da Vinci, of Boccaccio, and of all those writers of that illustrious age when men knew how to translate their ideal of Beauty into definite forms. The very intensity of their sensation, the response of their nerves to every appeal, vetoes the appeal of unsatisfied mysticism. The beauty of the material world is too eagerly grasped, it shines too brightly before their eyes, for them to desire

spiritual ideals. Indeed, they ignore their existence.

The bright reign of justice, the triumph of beauty, must be here, in this, not in any other world created by trusting faith or by winged fantasy. So does the Italian feel, so does the Italian novelist write. This is the keynote of modern Italian literature.

D'Annunzio typifies the racial tendency.

This profession of ethical principles is the cause of D'Annunzio's popularity, and is the explanation of his authority over contemporary novelists and poets. He has formulated the dimly perceived but constant tendency of his race. Many a half-conscious artist, wandering amid the obsolete teachings of Romanticism or of pseudo-religious Manzonian imitation, was encouraged by D'Annunzio's example to self-examination.

The craving for sensuous beauty, the glory in pagan ideals, the artist careful only for the precepts of his art, is the true Italian type, whether expressed by chisel, brush, or pen.

ALEXANDER MANZONI

Italian Romance Writers

ALEXANDER MANZONI

A day of mourning in Milan.

IT was a day in May. The vast square before the Cathedral of Milan was crowded with people. Yet the hundred spires and thousand statues of that wondrous church were unobserved; for heads were bowed, eyes filled with tears, and hearts were mourning. The streets of the city were hung with black, the front of the cathedral was draped in black. As the great central doors unfolded, the same funereal drapery was seen extending along the magnificent nave of the church.

There at the portal stood the Archbishop of Milan and his clergy—weeping. The military bands sounded their dirge, the long lines of soldiers presented arms, a coffin passed, followed by princes, nobles, and representatives of friendly nations. And the bells of the city tolled.

It is the funeral of Manzoni.

A stranger approaching that cathedral to learn the name of the king, or royal prince, who was thus mourned and thus honoured, would have

read these words written above the central portal of the church:

To Alexander Manzoni

Neither prince, nor king, nor even a simple soldier: this Manzoni was a private citizen—by profession a writer! Yet Italy wept!—and the world shared in her sorrow.

Manzoni's fame is enduring.

This appreciation of Manzoni was not transitory. The popular verdict given a generation ago is maintained. Manzoni is as much studied to-day, as greatly admired, as truly appreciated as he was at the time of his death. His great romance is a text-book in his country's schools. What are the sources of this enduring fame?

Manzoni's birth and education.

The story of Manzoni the man is soon told. Born in 1785, the only son of Don Pietro Manzoni, a Lombard nobleman, and of Giulia Beccaria, daughter of the author of *Dei delitti e delle pene,* he was educated by the friars in the Church schools of Lugano and Modena, and perhaps also in Padua. Freed from his schoolmasters in 1803, in Venice, he studied the Latin and Italian classics and admired the modern poetry of Parini and Monti. Then he went to Paris, living with his mother and Carlo Imbonati, to whom Manzoni was greatly attached.

In the fashionable salons of the gay French capital Manzoni passed the years of his early manhood, petted and admired. Yet the Voltairi-

an influence of Cabanis, Garat, Madame Condorcet, Volney, and Destutt de Tracy left slight mark upon his character or his thought. In 1810 he married Henriette Blondel, and to please her and her parents the ceremony was according to the Protestant rite; but Manzoni's whole life testifies to his constant adhesion to the ideal and the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church in which he was born, and to which, with his wife, he was afterward reunited.

Manzoni's marriage.

As so often happens with men who live intensely the intellectual life, Manzoni was peculiarly helpless in practical matters. He was intensely nervous, and in his later years he could not cross an open square. He would walk all round it, keeping close to the walls and requesting someone to accompany him. On being asked one day, "Why, Don Alessandro, do you get so muddled?" he wittily answered, "If I knew why, I would not become so." With advancing years this nervousness increased, and forewarned that inflammation of the brain of which he died.

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between such physical timidity and moral infirmity of purpose. That Manzoni was aware of his own irresolution and inaptitude for practical affairs appears in a letter he wrote to Giorgio Briano in 1848. He says:

His physical timidity and irresolution.

"I am entirely lacking in that sense of opportunity, that power of discerning the point, in

Manzoni's opinion of his infirmity.

which the possible and the desirable meet, and then sticking to it. I am bold when it is simply a question of discussing matters with my friends and initiating proposals which are quite paradoxical. I also display a certain amount of decision in the support of my opinions. But when from words we may possibly pass to actions, then I grow doubtful, muddled, and perplexed.

"The visionary as well as the irresolute man are useless participants in a conversation which aims at practical conclusions. Now I manage to represent both these personages. That which is possible I generally do not like; that which I like would seem extravagant and untimely to others, and would distress me if changed from a fond dream into a concrete action, weighing by its consequences on my conscience. My part in many important conversations can be resumed thus: I object to everything, I propose nothing."

These characteristics of moral and physical timidity are also revealed in Manzoni's attitude toward the political movements of his times.

He was not a moral coward.

But he was no coward, and above all he never gave comfort or sympathy to the enemy of his country. When Cantù was fleeing from the Austrians and had taken refuge in Piedmont, Manzoni crossed the frontiers to greet his friend. Afterward, at the time of the Milan uprising, his sons took part in the fighting, and he signed an appeal sent to Charles Albert, King of Sar-

dinia, imploring his pity and his help. As an Austrian suspect, these two acts were certainly done at the risk of Manzoni's life. In spite of seductive advances, he lived for forty-five years under Austrian rule without ever writing or uttering one word in their favor.

Manzoni and his friends.

Manzoni was peculiarly dependent on his friends. Either in his country-seat at Brusuglio, or in his house in Milan, his peaceful home became the meeting-place for men of intellect and of heart. At one time, when the Emperor of Brazil was visiting him and was thanked by his host for the honour, the Emperor replied: "It is I who should give you thanks for having received me at your fireside. In a little while the world will have forgotten even the name of Dom Pedro d'Alcantara, while future ages, and not only in Italy, will talk of Manzoni."

But Manzoni's greatest joy was to receive poor and unknown young writers and patriots, giving them material help, and by sympathy and kind words striving to revive their courage.

Death of Manzoni's wife and children.

Of his six children, death took three daughters in the flower of youth. After twenty-three years of most affectionate union, his wife Henriette died in 1833. Four years later he again married, that his children might have that care and guidance which he knew he was unable to give; yet he continued to mourn for the bride of his youth, who was the core of his heart and

his inspiration; and of whom in words worthy of him who depicted Hermengarde, he said: "Every day I resign her anew to God, and every day I ask her again from His hands." He lost his second wife, he lost sons and daughters and friends.

Manzoni's death, May, 1873.

Crushed by these successive blows, his health began to fail, and when, in April, 1873, his son Pietro died, it was the final blow. The next month his own life ended quietly. He passed over the river, and joined the wife and children and friends he so tenderly loved, and from whom he could not live apart.

Created Senator of the Kingdom of Italy in 1860, he rarely attended the sittings, but when he did so he was received with reverence and enthusiasm. He was a sincere Christian; the last book he read was the Sermons of Bourdaloue. When dying he asked forgiveness from his servants for any unkind words uttered in moments of delirium.

Manzoni's works the reflection of his life.

Manzoni's writings have for commentary his whole life. The dignity of his soul, the noble simplicity of his life, the sincerity of his faith, his originality and his modesty, his capacity for unchanging friendship have combined to make Manzoni *le chevalier sans peur et sans reproche* of Italian literature.

"A travers les nuages déchirés
Il s'éloigna . . . . et lentement
La mélodie sacrée monta . . . . "

Manzoni's influence continues.

For the influence of Manzoni continues, his voice still speaks and is listened to; his personality continues to have power. His immortality is assured. Whether he will or no a man writes himself into his books, and the high quality in Manzoni's work flamed from his own nature—noble, frank, pure. His genius consists in a morality founded on a religion of the heart, expansive in its charity, generous in its justice.

Manzoni considered literary work the noblest of missions. On a paper discovered in his room after his death was found the following sentence, copied from an English book: "When society becomes better enlightened, no literary performance which is a mere work of art will be tolerated." This feeling restrained him from admitting to his page anything unworthy of his lofty aim, even though he might thus add to its interest and popularity. Hence, the absence from his novel of scenes of love-making. In one of his posthumous papers he tells us that when he first wrote his novel all the love-scenes and tender endearments were there. But on revising his work this was left out. "Because," he says, "we ought not to write about love in such a manner as to awaken that passion in our reader's mind. . . . . There are many other feelings, such as pity, self-denial, a desire of justice, which a writer should strive to excite, there can never be too much of them; but as for love, there is cer-

Why love-scenes are omitted from his novel.

tainly more than enough for the preservation of our revered species."

Manzoni's attitude towards his novels.

He continues: "If literature had no higher aim than the amusement of people who are always amusing themselves, it would be the vilest, most frivolous of professions, and I would search for some manlier employment than this aping of the mountebank, who on the market-place entertains with a story a crowd of peasants; . . . . he at least affords pleasure to those who live in endless toil and misery."

In the introduction to his novel he in like manner addresses his readers: "If, after reading this book, you are not conscious of having acquired some new ideas on the story of the period I have described, or about the evils that weigh on humankind, and suggestion as to means to lighten them: if whilst you were reading, you have never been moved by a feeling of reprobation for wickedness, and of reverence for piety, nobleness, humanity, and justice, the publication of this book has been useless indeed, and the writer will deeply regret the time he has caused you to lose and that which he has spent over it himself."

What, then, is this remarkable book which, though published in 1826, still retains its popularity and power, and has been translated into almost every civilized language? In what does

it differ from the novels written by his illustrious contemporaries of other lands? Sir Walter Scott has depicted for us the Scotland of former times, with its mountains, its lakes, and its ruins. In the midst of this prospect he unfolds the many personifications of its traditions and customs. Archæologist, antiquary, and artist, he presents to us, not the teachings of history, but its pictures—pictures reproduced in their very reality; the past brought to light with love and with indifference for the future.

Sir Walter Scott's novels.

In *Notre-Dame de Paris,* Victor Hugo gathers together the entire Middle Age. But, in calling forth this tumultuous world, with its life so burning, passionate, and picturesque, with its miseries so profound, with all that which is violent, strange, and formidable; the author seems only to have desired the more surely to overwhelm the pitiful human personality. His object is to justify that word terrible and without hope, written on the first page of the book, and which breaks out from its last page: ΑΝΑΓΧΗ (fatality).

Hugo's "Notre-Dame de Paris."

I Promessi Sposi is something less ambitious, and inspired by a better spirit. It is the recital of the humble adventures of two village lovers whose union is thwarted by the cowardice of some, the violence of others, and by the complications of public events. Around Renzo and Lucia, and connected with their obscure trials, all Lombardy, all the Italy of the seventeenth

Manzoni's novel is different from these.

century, moves and unfolds its miseries, its unrest and its aspirations, at the epoch when the Spanish domination commenced to make of that country the caravansary of foreign ambitions.

In *I Promessi Sposi* all this is traced with the power and sobriety of the historian. Without obvious allusions, the connection between acts and their consequences present in some way the premises of moral and rational conclusions. All classes of seventeenth century Italian society, all the characteristics, all the passions, are shown within its frame.

His book is a true picture of Lombardy.

So carefully has Manzoni studied even the details of that past which he is depicting, that he is exact even when he is not true. His book is a vivid chapter of the memoirs of the people of Lombardy under the Spanish dominion—a picture true in its general traits and in its detailed characteristics, and in which the elements of history are so fused that they become one. Every social custom, every class of people, every type, has its proper place and its due importance in the general representation. He causes to live again under our very eyes these poor people, their life tormented, unhappy, but not despairing; for goodness, bravery, religious sentiment sustain them in the midst of cruel trials, and finally bring them peace and consolation. Each character detaches itself from the general mass and stands

out in relief. It is not only a face, a name, but a type. Often it is a living individual; someone one seems to have known, and with whom one renews acquaintance. Everywhere there is candor, simplicity, and propriety of expression, imagination and common sense. There is emotion, tenderness, and a pity which never becomes sentimental.

"I Promessi Sposi" is historically accurate.

The more carefully the historical framework of Manzoni's novel is examined the more accurate does it appear. The few historical personages and events are truthfully described. There is such knowledge of the feelings and manners, customs and opinions of the times described, such intuition of the degree of development attained by the various social conditions and individual types.

The difference between a purely historic study and such a romance is small, and daily grows smaller. The modern novelist is required to make his historic setting to substantially accord with the facts. The historian realizes that, besides a mere narration of facts, he is concerned with the story of souls and the interpretation of psychological laws. Thus history tends to become as interesting as fiction, and historic fiction as accurate as history.

The characteristics of "I Promessi Sposi."

The woof of Manzoni's story is that everything reposes on a providential order, and over this woof there is developed a tissue of events most

varied. The description is clear, the conception frank, the forms changing but always beautiful. The dialogues are usually spontaneous and life-like. The personages of the romance have become proverbial. The sincerest flattery and surest proof of his success was found in the host of his imitators, which finally became the Manzonian school and served to continue its traditions.

The plot of the story.

After a short description of the scenery around the lake of Como, the story begins by showing us Don Abbondio, the curate of a small hamlet, arrested on his way home by two fierce-looking *bravi,* who in the name of their master, Don Rodrigo, warn him, on peril of his life, that he must not celebrate the marriage arranged for the morrow between Renzo Tramaglino and Lucia Mondella. Cowardly Don Abbondio gives the required promise, and in great distress hastens home to seek comfort from his servant, Perpetua.

At an early hour next morning Renzo calls on the curate to inquire the hour for the marriage celebration. He is exhorted to be patient, as he will have to wait some days longer. The dissatisfied lover gets the truth from Perpetua, and tries by threats to compel Don Abbondio to do his duty. Lucia, on being told what has occurred, gives a clue to the situation by telling her mother Agnese and Renzo how, a few days ago,

she had been accosted by Don Rodrigo and another gentleman, and how she heard the two making a wager, the purport of which she guessed. Fra Cristoforo has been her only confidant.

Renzo is sent to Lecco to ask advice from Doctor Azzeccagarbugli, who, on learning that the adverse party is the powerful nobleman, quickly washes his hands of the matter.

Fra Cristoforo appears on the scene.

The mother and daughter send for Fra Cristoforo. He sympathizes with their sorrow, and undertakes to beard the tyrant in his den. In Don Rodrigo's castle the friar discovers the plot to carry off Lucia, and he contrives for her escape. Agnese, too, has a plan; and accordingly at nightfall the betrothed steal into Don Abbondio's house, attended by two witnesses, and almost get through the marriage ceremony before the curate recovers his wits. By an act of violence he stops them, and rouses the neighborhood by his cries for help.

Agnese and the betrothed, who have managed to slip out of the house during the confusion, are met by a messenger from Fra Cristoforo, who bids them hasten to the convent. From there the good friar sends Lucia and Agnese to the Convent of Monza, and Renzo goes to Milan in search of work.

But misfortune follows these poor people. Renzo arrives at Milan at the moment of a bread

A sequence of misfortunes.

riot, and so compromises himself as to be arrested. He escapes the police, and flies from Milan to Bergamo, while Fra Cristoforo, having incurred the enmity of Don Rodrigo, is sent to Rimini, and the nun who has promised to watch over Lucia betrays her into the hands of the Unknown, a friend of Don Rodrigo's. Shut up in a chamber of the castle of the Unknown, Lucia is in despair. Suddenly the heart of this violent man is changed, and he frees Lucia. But liberty brings no joy, because during that dreadful night in the castle she has vowed to renounce her lover and to consecrate herself to the Virgin Mary.

Two misfortunes now fall upon Milan. The plague breaks out in the city, and an army wastes the surrounding country. Attended by Perpetua and Agnese, Don Abbondio flies from danger to the Unknown. Renzo takes advantage of the confusion created by the plague, and returns to seek Lucia in the stricken town. He encounters Fra Cristoforo, who is ministering to the sick, then sees Don Rodrigo dying of the plague, and last of all discovers Lucia, convalescent from the infection. Fra Cristoforo, having freed Lucia from her vow of virginity, dies from the plague, and the betrothed are married by Don Abbondio, and go with Agnese to enjoy a happy home in Bergamo.

Manzoni's Friars.

The characters of this novel separate themselves naturally into several groups, of which the most interesting are its FRIARS.

The friar in Italian life.

In Italy the friar is still to be seen, lurking in the background. In by-streets his face sometimes appears emerging from the cowl; as he crosses the gay avenues of cities his sandalled feet are in danger from prancing horses and swift automobiles. This *Deus ex machina* of ancient plots, this solver of puzzling intrigues, intermediary in bringing about the marriage of despairing lovers and the penitence of condemned malefactors, is dead and gone. No one could now describe him as Manzoni did in the first pages of *I Promessi Sposi.* At the period of which Manzoni wrote no station was too high, none too lowly, for a Capuchin friar. He served the most miserable wretches, and was served by the most powerful lords. With fearless yet humble mien he crossed the threshold of a palace; yet the dweller in the sordid hovel was his brother. In the same house he might be the amusement of the menials, and yet the counsellor and guide of the master. He took alms from all, and gave to all who came to his convent door; for a friar was prepared for all things.

It were a useless task to seek among French *fabliaux* and Italian *novelle* for the original type of Manzoni's friars, for the characteristic of all those figures is their incompleteness. Even as

portrayed by the masters the friar remains an unfinished figure, a silhouette. The *fabliaux* show us a burlesque mannikin of broad humour and obscene jests, and the *novellatori* accept this model, never troubling to put a real man under the cowl. It is different with Manzoni's friars. In their *ensemble* they make a group which gives us a more lifelike and more accurate idea of what they were and how they were regarded than is to be found elsewhere in fiction. "Passing along the street he might either meet a prince, who would reverently kiss the end of the knotted cord hanging by his side, or a party of urchins, who, under pretence of quarrelling with each other, would pelt him with mud. The name of 'friar' was at that time uttered with the greatest respect and with the utmost contempt; of both of these feelings the Capuchin friars received the largest share."

The pious and obedient Fra Galdino.

The first friar which Manzoni presents to the reader is Fra Galdino. Announced by a *Deo gratias,* bowing very low, with his double bag slung over his left shoulder and grasping its twisted ends with both his hands, he enters the cottage where Lucia and her mother Agnese are sitting in loneliness on what should have been the wedding-day. On the subject of alms-giving Galdino is eloquent. His text is, "Give alms to the friars, because we are like the sea which receives water from everywhere and distributes

it all again to the rivers." In contrast with the simple faith and obedience of Fra Galdino, we have the diplomatic friar—the *Padre Provinciale*, or head of the monastery. He is only known in a single scene, yet the outline is as accurate as a portrait. He is a guest at a grand dinner given by the powerful count, Don Rodrigo's uncle. In the after-dinner tête-à-tête we have an amusing battle of wits between the Count and the *Padre*. Cautiously fencing, the Count refers to their "common interest in an affair that might . . . . ."

The powerful and diplomatic Padre Provinciale.

Then he burns a little incense under the Capuchin's nose, and finally, coming to his real subject, he insinuates that he has some reason for believing that Fra Cristoforo is quarrelsome. The wily Father guesses his purpose, and decides to sacrifice his turbulent friar rather than offend the powerful noble. Yet he must not sacrifice the dignity of his Order; the Count must feel that the favor granted merits compensation.

By a few bold strokes Manzoni has also drawn the figure of a narrow-minded and suspicious friar. Fra Cristoforo has asked Fra Fazio, the sexton, to wait with him in the chapel, and to leave the door ajar for the refugees. "When the fugitives had come in, Father Cristoforo gently shut the door. The outraged sexton whispered, 'But, Father! . . . . with women . . . . and the door shut . . . . against the rule!' Fra Cristoforo considered: 'If a common robber, a mur-

Narrow-minded and suspicious Fra Fazio.

derer to escape pursuit, had taken refuge here, Fra Fazio would have raised no objection, yet for this poor, innocent lamb flying from the wolf . . .' '*Omnia mundo mundis,*' said he aloud, turning abruptly toward Fra Fazio, and forgetting that the latter did not understand Latin. This forgetfulness, however, produced the desired effect. On hearing those words of mysterious import, uttered with such a resolute accent, Fra Fazio felt sure that they must contain an answer to all his doubts, and said: 'Very well, you know better!'"

Fra Cristoforo is the immortal friar of Manzoni's novel.

But the immortal friar of Manzoni's work, the creature of his heart, whom he has traced with love, and into whom he has transfused the better part of himself, is Fra Cristoforo. Like Shakespeare's Friar Laurence, Fra Cristoforo is not only an important character in the novel, but one of the best examples of the friar that is to be found in literature. The two figures have traits in common: both are Italian, both are connected with a love affair; but there the similarity ends. And in these two authors' divergent views of the friar type we have a measure of the distance between two different epochs of literature; for Manzoni, writing in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, describes a seventeenth century scene, while Shakespeare, writing two hundred years earlier, represents fourteenth century life.

In the Shakespearian fresco the friar is not

meant to be fully seen; the lights fall on one side of the figure, while some parts are left in shadow. Manzoni's friar, on the contrary, is accurately pencilled, nicely finished, and set in full sunshine; yet, of the two, Shakespeare's friar is the more complete. The first words uttered by the friar of *Romeo and Juliet* give an idea of the man: of his kindliness, his admiration for nature, his sympathy with all that surrounds him. The gray-eyed morn smiling on the frowning night; the winsome grace that lies in herbs, plants, stones—all these he studies and loves; but neither his mind nor his heart is indifferent to the wants and the frailties of his fellow men.

Shakespeare's Friar Laurence.

He knows that virtue itself changes to vice, being misapplied, and that sometimes even crime is dignified by heroic action. He knows, too, that a young man's love lies not in his heart but in his eyes. He perceives the inconstancy of Romeo's change of sweethearts in a single night. Still, he does not despair of human nature; and with this young love as his lever he hopes to turn rancour into sweetness, and that ultimately he may bring peace to the warring houses of Montague and Capulet.

Manzoni has not found for his friar so effective an *entrée,* but describes this friar with care and exactitude. Ludovico, Fra Cristoforo that is to be, was a young man of brilliant talent, but sowing his wild oats and reaping a harvest of

Why Fra Cristoforo became a friar.

bitter experience. In a street broil he kills a man. He escapes from arrest by fleeing to a neighbouring convent, and there resolves to make amends for his crime. Summoning a notary, he conveys his property to the widow and children of Cristoforo, whom he has slain; and, convinced that the hand of God has led him to the convent, thus saving him from his pursuers, he resolves to enter religion and become a friar. "Thus at the age of thirty Ludovico took the religious habit, and, being required, as customary, to change his name, he chose one that would continually remind him of the sin he had to expiate—the name of Cristoforo."

Before he departs for a distant cloister, the newly made friar wishes to supplicate the pardon of the murdered man's brother. On the appointed day the friends and dependents assemble in the palace, while the *Seigneur,* surrounded by his nearest relatives, stands in the centre of the room, his looks downcast, his right hand crossed over his breast, his left hand grasping the hilt of his sword. He has the true Italian instinct for pose, and enjoys his rôle as chief actor in this drama of forgiveness and reconciliation. The pardon having been duly asked and granted, and the proffered refreshments declined, Fra Cristoforo begs a loaf of bread, "that I may partake of your charity and eat of your bread after being blessed with your forgiveness."

How differently do Shakespeare's and Manzoni's friars deal with the problem of the respective lovers and their desire for marriage. Of course, Friar Laurence will devoutly say: *Shakespeare's and Manzoni's friars contrasted.*

> "So smile the heavens upon this holy act,
> That after hours with sorrow chide us not."

But he allows the lover's impatience to urge him on; and though he knows that "violent delights have violent ends," and that "too swift arrives as tardy as too slow," still his generous heart makes short work of it, and Holy Church incorporates these two in one.

> "Go, get thee to thy love, as was decreed,
> Ascend her chamber, hence and comfort her."

And this, considering the circumstances, is real human charity. But is it a friar that acts and speaks so? If Shakespeare has here forgotten to put the cowl and hood over his figure of a man, Manzoni forgets to put a man into the monastic robe. Cristoforo, for some unknown reason, does not even try to marry the lovers; but orders Renzo, in this moment of danger, to leave his betrothed, and that each should go a different way.

Cristoforo is not made for action. The most important things happen while he is away somewhere in the South. Here we feel the weakness of Manzoni; it is as if in these stirring events he did not know what to do with the saintly friar;

so he locks him up in a convent, and there keeps him till the time comes for him to reappear, when he is brought forward again. Toward the end we find him in the *lazzaretto,* attending the sick with characteristic devotion for his fellow men. Here, surrounded by distress and pain, and amid the saddest spectacle that human misery can present—scenes which Manzoni describes with a power unequalled by any of his younger rivals—Cristoforo looms grand as the spirit of compassion over this ocean of suffering.

Meeting between Cristoforo and Renzo in the lazzaretto.

Renzo has been wandering through the *lazzaretto* in search of Lucia, dreading yet longing to find her there, when he espies Cristoforo. The friar is partaking of his frugal repast, peering about and listening for the first call from one of the many sufferers around him. Exhausted by his heavy task, death's seal is stamped on his pallid features; but his heart is unchanged, his zeal unquenched. After the first inquiries, Renzo mutters curses against the author of all his misery. "Miserable man!" exclaims Fra Cristoforo, in a voice full and sonorous, as in former days. "Look, miserable man! Behold all around us who punishes! Who judges! What do you know of vengeance, what of justice? Begone! You have betrayed all my hopes!"

Bending his head, in slow, deep tones he adds: "Do you know why I wear this garb? . . . . I too have hated—I, who resented a hasty word of

yours. I killed the man I hated. I too have hated with all my soul; and the man I hated, that man I slew." "Yes, a tyrant; one of those——" "Hush!" interrupted the friar. "Think you that if there were any excuse I should not have found it in thirty years? Ah, if I could but instil into your heart the sentiment I have ever since had for the man I hated! But God can! Listen, Renzo . . . ." The beautiful sequel must be read in its entirety to be appreciated.

Exit of both Shakespeare's and Manzoni's friars.

Both Shakespeare and Manzoni have given each to his friar an appropriate exit. As Shakespeare's story permits Friar Laurence to go in peace, and the Prince is justified in saying, "We still have known thee for a holy man," so in Manzoni's we learn "with more sorrow than surprise that Fra Cristoforo died of the plague."

This is the beauty and this the weakness of such a character: it is above nature. Yet a human soul has conceived it, other human souls have comprehended it, responding to this pure flame of love as to the call of some kindred spirit. Modern novelists are always ready to discover the evil lurking in our poor humanity. Thanks be to Manzoni, who shows us the possibilities of our *ondoyante et diverse* human nature!

There are also some nuns in Manzoni's novel; but all are shadowy save Gertrude, the ill-fated wretch who assists Lucia's persecutors. We are told all the circumstances that perverted the soul

The nun in Manzoni's novel.

of Gertrude before she entered the monastery. He condemns the nun, but he more sternly condemns her parents. Gertrude is heart-sick, and, like many another sufferer, finds comfort in making other people unhappy. Manzoni's analysis is accurate, but it lacks warmth. The author has no sympathy for the nun who has violated her vows, and she is dismissed as soon as possible. Her fate remains as mysterious as the walls of her convent.

In the story of this nun we are introduced to some of the nobility: the Prince, her father, who cleverly manœuvres to persuade Gertrude to enter the cloister; the Princess, whose affection is concentrated on her son and heir; the Young Prince, "as brisk as a hare, and who must not be kept waiting"; her uncles, who glibly encourage the prospective nun; the relatives, friends, and parasites that compliment her; the servants who share their master's views—all complete the picture of a Milanese noble household of that time.

Don Rodrigo a typical tyrant.

Don Rodrigo is a type of those noble-born tyrants whom the Spaniards protected and used as tools. He is the product of many causes, is moulded by circumstances, and is what many another man might have been in his place. When finally he meets with failure he tries to forget it by leading a more reckless life. If finally infected by the plague, it is merely because from this

danger he could neither fly nor be preserved by his followers or his castle stronghold. The description of his illness and removal to the *lazzaretto* by the *monatti,* and afterward his death, is famous.

The Unknown—more correctly the Unnamed—has an important place in the novel; the change happening in his soul brings about the crisis in Lucia's fate. When we first meet him he has conquered every human foe, but there is another combat which is only now beginning. He is troubled by that unconquerable adversary, his conscience. In the security of his guarded stronghold, in the glory of his established fame, he begins "to doubt whether the Divine Law he has so far ignored may not be something which has an accomplishment." He measures the difference between Lucia's helplessness and his own power, and, though wishing "that she might have been the daughter of his most cruel foe, it would have been so pleasant to see her weep," he utters that "to-morrow" which is the harbinger of his transformation.

The Unknown conquered by his conscience.

Cardinal Borromeo, who so tactfully directs the first steps of the penitent, well knows that the man's character is not changed, but only directed into another channel. The eagerness for praise, the desire to be supreme, are still there. Cardinal Borromeo, though he bears an historic name and is copied from the life of an historic

personage, is one of the least lifelike characters in the novel. He is the impersonation of the ideal priest. This embodiment of all Christian virtue stands as a foil to all the petty vanities, weakness, fears, intrigues, that swarm around him.

Contrast between the ideal priest, Cardinal Borromeo, and the base priest, Don Abbondio.

The counterpart of this saintly priest is that most popular of all Manzoni's characters—Don Abbondio. All the baseness that tyranny has produced, all the immorality that is born of oppression, the petty cunning, the blind submission to every person that can harm—all these combine to make Don Abbondio. He is a coward, conscious of his cowardice; and in a certain sense we approve of his . . . . excessive prudence. When he is accosted by the two *bravi* he is so frightened that he immediately obeys their command. It is not Don Rodrigo whom he blames, but Renzo, "who must be raving after Lucia for want of something else to do!"

Comical attempt at marriage by surprise.

And what could not Manzoni have achieved as a playwright! There is not in all the Italian theatre a more comical scene than the attempted marriage by surprise in Don Abbondio's house. The Curate's soliloquy over his books in the security of his own room; the entrance of the two witnesses introduced by Perpetua; the money transaction between the Curate and the witnesses; then the sudden apparition between them of the betrothed; Don Abbondio snatching up the table-cloth and wrapping Lucia's head and

face with it, to prevent her from uttering the consecrated words; the upsetting of the lamp, with all these people groping in the dark, each intent on a different aim—all described with a *brio* seldom equalled in Goldoni's plays. Only in Molière's best comedies do we find such a psychological foundation to an exhilarating scene.

The mental standpoint of Don Abbondio

How amusing Don Abbondio's reflections all along the road! He grumbles at "those people who are born with a troublesome spirit and must ever be making a fuss. . . . . Is it so difficult to act an honest part all one's life, as I have done? . . . . No; they must go murdering, cutting to pieces, playing the devil—O me!—and even make a rumpus when they do penance! . . . . Surely, one can be a penitent at home, in private, without such a noise . . . . without giving so much trouble to everybody."

"When Cardinal Borromeo upbraids him for his cowardly desertion of the sheep intrusted to his care, Don Abbondio bowed low his head; he felt under the weight of these arguments like a chicken under the talons of a hawk, that holds it suspended in an unknown region, in an atmosphere it has never breathed." He does not repent; because he makes a virtue of saving his life. "When one has to do with powerful people who will not listen to reason it is foolish to run into peril." "We cannot give ourselves

courage"—and why should the Cardinal care more for the love-making of two young people than the life of one of his priests? "O, what a saintly man! But what a troublesome one!"

Lucia and Renzo are weak characters.

Lucia and Renzo are weak characters moulded by every surrounding influence. Lucia is so passive that we do not pity her, though we blame the social conditions which, by fostering a Don Rodrigo and all such oppressors, make it possible to so curb and crush a human creature. Renzo is less shadowy. The attempted surprise of Don Abbondio is clever, though he acts the simpleton in the hands of Azzeccagarbugli.

The part he plays in the bread riots is only imprudent. When he sees the bakery plundered he perceives the futility of the act. "If they thus serve all the bake-houses, where will they make their bread?" But after witnessing the victory of the mob he is easily persuaded that the success of any enterprise can be secured by the co-operation of the rabble, and to them he appeals for help. His speech to the mob is a marvel of construction; its vague ideas are in accord with the speaker's and the listener's feelings. It truly portrays the times, but the speaker remains the impersonation of a type, not an individuality.

Lifelike secondary characters.

Many of the secondary characters are lifelike. The High Chancellor Ferrer driving in his coach through the infuriated mob, abusing them in Spanish to his coachman, but presenting

now at one window, now at the other, a countenance full of humility, sweetness, and benevolence—kissing his hand, lavishing promises, and begging for a little space to get on—is life-like.

The frightened Superintendent, who wanders from room to room, and commends himself to God and to his servants, while the rabble howl and thunder at his door, is also a worthless tool of a bad master. The host of the Full Moon is another. On seeing Renzo enter his tavern attended by a spy, he mutters to himself: "I do not know you, but since you come with such a hunter you must be either a dog or a hare."

Perpetua's name has become typical.

Perpetua is almost as popular a character as Don Abbondio. Her name has become the common noun for a whole class of persons—middle-aged spinsters attached to a clergyman's service. In the enforced intimacy of such small establishments Perpetua must either be a saint attending to the wants of a saint, or else an object of ridicule or contempt. She is "an affectionate and faithful servant, who knows how to command and how to obey; who can bear the grumblings of her master and make him bear hers." Her advice is always ready, and is usually sensible.

An artist like Manzoni shows his discernment in the fact that, having created such successful secondary characters he has resisted the temptation to make them unduly prominent.

There are some peaceful nooks in this Milan-

The peaceful side of the Milanese world.

ese world of Manzoni's. There is the picture of Don Ferrante and Donna Prassede, whose house for a short time shelters Lucia. A henpecked husband, a kind, blundering wife, "always getting herself and others into mischief because she only uses means which are calculated to promote the very opposite of that which she intends." There is the humble household of the tailor, where Lucia is first escorted by Don Abbondio on leaving the castle. The good dame, wise in her sayings and doings, and her husband, "who was able to read and had read all the *Reali di Francia,* and yet modestly repelled the praises of his countrymen."

"When he beheld Cardinal Borromeo entering his own house he bustled his way through the crowd, crying out: 'Make room for those who have a right to enter!'" And when the Cardinal speaks to him, he is so "animated by his desire to show off before his Eminence that he wrinkles his brow, presses his mouth, and is so confused that he finds nothing better than a *'Si figuri!'* (Only think), and he will forever regret all the nice speeches he might have made."

Manzoni comprehended humanity in the mass.

But Manzoni not only ably analyzed a character and perceived the inner workings of an individual soul; he also possessed the rarer gift of comprehending humanity in the mass. A crowd is more than a multiplication of individuals. In the ever-varying mixture and its uncer-

tain results is found the problem which puzzles the statesman and tempts the novelist. Few men have so successfully guessed the riddle as Manzoni. The bread riots in Milan are an illustration. Manzoni states causes which have brought about the scarcity: deficient harvests; the havoc of war, with the consequent devastation and scanty tillage of the land; then certain circumstances have aggravated the disease. The magistrates, guided by no standard of right, only promulgated illegal measures that exaggerated the evil.

Manzoni, the economist.

These things are described with the eyes of an economist; but when the spark has been set to the accumulated fuel, when the tumult roars in the streets and squares, when the passions of the crowd are unchained, then Manzoni has the soul of a poet to interpret the storm, the perception of a psychologist to follow the individual currents of thought, and the talent of the writer that can build up this complex structure with power and beauty.

Manzoni, the poet and artist.

Renzo's progress across the plague-stricken city presents vivid pictures. The woman immured in the infected house and begging a loaf of bread from Renzo; the funeral convoy of many cars heaped high with half-naked corpses; the description of the most desolated quarters of the city and the *lazzaretto*. Sometimes some suave apparition appears, as of the mother lay-

Manzoni's description of the plague.

ing her dead babe on the car and kissing it a last farewell, and our strained nerves have short respite before we proceed through still darker scenes.

Law of contrast demanded by Romanticism.

In obedience to the law of contrasts demanded by Romanticism, death and torment, vice and folly, are indeed set as a foil to self-denial and godliness, but it is only moral beauty which Manzoni opposes to moral ugliness. He shuns the easy virtuosity of furbishing his favourites with the glamour of beauty. Lucia, recovering from her illness, has none of the delicacy or sentimental paleness of the typical romantic heroine. Renzo . . . . what could not a romantic writer have made with Renzo's face and figure!

But Manzoni will have good triumph over evil without alien help! Not because they are young and fair shall the betrothed be finally happy and united; but because they have been the victims of wrong-doing, and because they have trusted God.

Boccaccio's and Manzoni's descriptions of plague compared.

A comparison between Boccaccio's and Manzoni's description of the plague measures the difference between the view-point of the *Renaissance* and that of the *Risorgimento*. Boccaccio describes vividly the sights that have impressed him. He loves life, and is dismayed by its evils. The deserted town, the sick dying solitary, the dead lying unburied, is repulsive; it nause-

ates him. If friends and relatives fearfully avoid each other; if magistrates and statesmen flee from danger and duty, Boccaccio does not blame them. He is as indifferent to the law of love as were his masters—the Greek and Latin poets. His Florentine dames and cavaliers are witty and clever and gay in the security of their country villa, yet their moral evolution is that of the Roman matrons who slew gladiators with their down-turned thumbs. Diversion is their refuge from sorrow, and Boccaccio approves. Manzoni's whole work is an eloquent exposition of the law of love, and his description of the plague is a hymn to those feelings and to the duties they imply.

Boccaccio and Manzoni alike suggest no resistance to fate.

The common trait between pagan Boccaccio and Christian Manzoni, the only resemblance which betrays their common Latinism, is their incapacity to suggest courageous resistance to fate. The only escape from misery is evasion—egotistical diversion in Boccaccio, blind trust in some future compensation in Manzoni; but neither suggests courageous resistance of evils that are tangible and can be fought with tangible weapons.

Some critics declare the plot of *I Promessi Sposi* old-fashioned. Manzoni has anticipated this criticism by one of his quaint similes: "I remember a clever boy I once watched driving a herd of Indian pigs to their sty. Vainly he tried to

push them all at once. When he had caught one of them, the others would run off. At last, by dint of pushing inside, first those that were near at hand, then the others as they came closer, he finally succeeded in penning them all. Thus must I manage with my personages."

Manzoni is never in a hurry. He stops to crack his joke or insert a personal reflection with that pleasant deliberateness unknown to our strenuous modern novelists.

Manzoni's farewell to the scenes of his novel.

We have, too, poetical apostrophes: "Farewell, ye mountains, rising out of the waters, upreared toward the sky! Farewell, varied summits, as familiar as the face of a friend! Farewell, ye torrents, whose roaring sounds like friendly voices! Villas scattered over the declivities, like herds of grazing sheep, farewell! Whoever has lived with you and must leave you moves sadly away. Even in the soul of him who voluntarily departs, allured by golden promises, at the moment of parting from you, the dream of wealth seems tawdry; and he wonders how he can have thus resolved and would fain remain."

His quaint farewell to his readers.

Quaintly Manzoni says farewell to his readers. "The reports that Bergamascans had heard of Lucia and of Renzo's great attachment to her had excited an extravagant idea of her beauty. When Lucia made her appearance they shrugged their shoulders, and said: 'Is this the girl? We expected something quite different!

Women like her and fairer than she are to be met with every day!' Renzo refrained, but longed to answer: 'Did I tell you that she was fair? Do you not like her? . . . . You need not look at her!'" Is Lucia here meant for the book itself? And Manzoni declares that whatever the great public might think of his book, he was satisfied with it.

MASSIMO TAPARELLI D'AZEGLIO

MASSIMO TAPARELLI D'AZEGLIO

WHEN we have seen the picture, heard the opera, and read the novel wherein some "genius" has put the best of himself, we know all that is interesting of many a painter, musician, and novelist; for the unusual development of one faculty often means the dwarfing of others. The "genius" is usually a one-sided man. But there are a privileged few in whom the harmonious expansions of the moral and intellectual life present a satisfying sense of completeness—men who, like Massimo Taparelli D'Azeglio, by consistent endeavour and worthy living, have attained a place among the elect.

Save the privileged few, the genius is usually a one-sided man.

The Taparelli belonged to the sturdy and loyal Piedmontese nobility, worthy descendants of the "*male assuetus Ligur*" admired by Julius Cæsar. The father, Cesare Taparelli, was a soldier, and he wished his sons to be soldiers. "It was our father's custom to take us for long walks regulated by special rules. We were forbidden to ask: 'How many miles have we walked?' 'How many more have we to do?' 'What o'clock is it?' Nor were we allowed to say that we were either thirsty, tired, cold, or hungry."

The Taparelli family.

When seventeen years of age D'Azeglio en-

D'Azeglio's early life.

listed in the city militia, and assisted the untriumphant return of King Victor Emanuel I. on May 20th.

"I was on parade in Piazza Castello, and can well remember the group formed by the King and his staff. With their antiquated garments, powdered periwigs, and hats à la Frédéric II., they certainly cut a strange figure. . . . His Majesty did not even possess a coach and pair, so my father presented him a grand gala coach, which had done duty at his own marriage; a huge machine all crystal and gildings, with dropsical cherubs painted on its panels.

The return of Victor Emanuel I.

"In this chariot the King was driven through the streets of Turin all day and until midnight, amidst the cheers and rejoicings of the people. His booby face popping out of the gilded windows, lavishing smiles and salutations right and left, with the accompaniment of that funny little tail of his periwig sweeping his shoulders, to the great enjoyment of us all."

D'Azeglio's first visit to Rome.

In the following year D'Azeglio's father was sent as Ambassador to Rome to bear the restored King's greetings to the restored Pope, and our youthful warrior accompanied him as secretary. What a biting satire on this corrupt Rome when his most truthful father suggested that on their return home "it would be well to speak charitably of a place where they had met such kindness."

The disgust excited by these first impressions of

Rome made D'Azeglio an anticlerical for life; his disapproval of the restored government in Piedmont made him a liberal. Why should he, a mere stripling, be raised to a higher rank in the army than those veterans who had bravely battled on many fields? Tuinese society was amazed when the gay young officer, the promising rake, breaking from his former associates, started for Rome to study painting and live on a pittance, until he could earn his own bread with his brush.

D'Azeglio becomes an anticlerical and liberal.

His hatred of conspiracy kept him aloof from Carbonarism as long as it was a secret society, but when, in 1845, the leaders proposed an open revolt, he enthusiastically enlisted in the movement. After a tour in Romagna, to understand the real disposition of the people, D'Azeglio asked and obtained an audience with the King. "The King's countenance seemed to promise a kind response to my appeal, but I had some reason to fear it would be *'ibis redibis,'* and leave me no wiser than when I had come in. With his eyes steadily fixed on mine, Carlo Alberto said: 'Let these gentlemen know that, in case of favourable opportunity presenting itself, they may be sure that my life, my children, my army, treasures, weapons, my all; will I spend in the defense of the Italian cause.' "

He joins the revolt of 1845.

Three years later came the favourable opportunity. Carlo Alberto declared war, and D'Azeg-

D'Azeglio in war and in politics.

lio threw himself into the conflict. Badly wounded at the battle of Monte Berico, D'Azeglio was carried to Florence. Gloomily he wrote to his sister: "We will have to go down to the very bottom before we recover our footing after this." This "we" was indeed personal, since D'Azeglio was Prime Minister. D'Azeglio's political career was virtually ended on the day when he introduced Count Cavour into the Privy Council, and when to King Victor Emanuel's warning "that this man would never be satisfied with one portfolio, but must have them all," he answered: "Let him, sire, as it will be for the welfare of the country!"

D'Azeglio's private life.

To a noble public career, the dignity of his private life was a fitting counterpart. This Marquis, who had been Prime Minister and Governor of Provinces, in every interval of office plodded at his easel, earning his daily bread. Of his marriage with Giulia, daughter of Manzoni, there is little to say. If it did not prove happy, the secret—perhaps a royal secret—was well kept. His only daughter Alessandra married Marquis Ricci.

D'Azeglio writes his novel.

From painting an historical picture, he turned to writing an historical novel. "The eagerness of writing was added to that of painting; I rushed headlong on the new track. I scarcely had patience enough to find out, in Guicciardini, the necessary passages, and immediately dashed on

the first scene in the Piazza of Barletta. What did I know about that part of Italy? I just took the pains of measuring on the first map the distance between Barletta and Mount Gargano; and guessing that it must be visible from the town, I set it boldly as the background of my plan. Then I proceeded to build up a Barletta, an islet of Sant' Orsola, a Rocca, out of my own fantasy, presenting to the world a whole host of useless personages."

"Ettore Fieramosca" an imitation of Walter Scott.

Of course in a novel thus written the plot is improbable, the characters vague. This *Ettore Fieramosca* is a clumsy imitation of Walter Scott in his most romantic vein, yet it was hailed with enthusiasm. It pointed out possibilities, gave voice to slumbering aspirations, awakened self-confidence and pride, in the disheartened descend ants of the thirteen Italian heroes whose praise D'Azeglio sung.

Plot of "Ettore Fieramosca."

The saintly Lady Gertrude is harshly treated by her husband, Count Graiano d'Asti. Cesare Borgia orders the poor woman to be drugged; apparently dead, she is carried into the family vault, where her lover, Ettore Fieramosca, as he prays and weeps, with joy and amaze sees the beloved one rise from her coffin. Ettore Fieramosca hides her from the monster Borgia and her conniving husband in the Convent of Saint Orsola, near Barletta. There she experiences the romantic adventures proper to such heroines,

and the reader gets the usual dose of knights, wastrels, innkeepers, nuns, and pages, street broils, duels, tournaments, and shipwrecks. Finally Gertrude again falls into the clutches of Cesare Borgia and dies of a broken heart, whilst Ettore is last seen alive riding to the brow of a cliff, at the foot of which his mangled corpse is afterward discovered.

"The Challenge of Barletta" an historical episode.

The episode which gives to the book its second title, *The Challenge of Barletta,* is a detached page of history. In the year 1503, the French and the Italo-Spanish armies being in proximity near Barletta, a challenge was sent by thirteen Italian knights to as many French—Bayard and Prosper Colonna sitting as umpires. The Italians won the day.

Fanfulla da Lodi an idealized freebooter.

One of the characters, Fanfulla da Lodi, the brave and witty *condottiere,* is the idealized type of those freebooters whose recklessness has ever been admired . . . . in novels. When we again meet Fanfulla, in D'Azeglio's second novel, he is twenty years older, has been present at the siege and plunder of Rome, where he has lost one eye, and has been so shocked by the wickedness and cruelty around him that he has entered the Convent of San Marco, in Florence. Here, on a cheerless, damp morning of October, 1529, with an appropriate accompaniment of roaring cannon, to a congregation of armed men, he assists in serving early mass over the corpse of Baccio,

Niccolò de' Lapi's son, who has fallen on the ramparts of Florence, then besieged by the Imperial army.

Florence destroyed by treason.

If treason and party division had not destroyed her, Florence might have resisted both Emperor and Pope. The traitor was Malatesta Baglioni, that able but unprincipled captain, called from Perugia to direct the defence of Florence. The gay Florentine noblemen swarmed round the Medicean escutcheon—six balls of azure in a field of gold, from which their name of *Palleschi*—whilst the followers of Savonarola were nicknamed *Piagnoni* from their perpetual lamentations.

Niccolò de' Lapi, the leader of the people.

Niccolò de' Lapi is a leader of the popular party. "His shoulders were square, his figure tall and strong, his cheeks ruddy; both flowing beard and hair were snow white; while underneath his dark eyebrows his coal-black eyes glittered fiercely." He is eighty years old, he kneels beside the coffin of his son (the third who has fallen), yet in his prayer, he offers to God his own and his other children's lives. As he rises from his knees he permits Bindo, his youngest son, to go and fill the place left empty by the dead brother. Niccolò was among the first disciples of Savonarola, and in his house the saint's ashes and the last robe worn by him are treasured as sacred relics in a shrine. The old man, sitting under the ever-burning lamp before the niche, is

next shown presiding over this assembly of children and friends.

Household of Niccolò de' Lapi. We enter the household of one of these wealthy merchants who dictate the law to princes in their money transactions, who discuss state affairs, issue orders to the Commanders of armies in their pay, yet eat simple meals on rough boards, and, disregarding the silks and velvets with which they supplied the world, wear only the cloth *"lucco e cappuccio"* recommended by Savonarola.

The family of Niccolò de' Lapi. Three sons and two daughters are grouped round Niccolò. "On the thoughful brow of Laudomia, the eldest, in the slow but suave movements of her eyes, in the sound of her voice and in every gesture, there shone an indefinite something, most maidenlike and pure, which is not the privilege of one time of life, or one social condition. A subtle something which at times will adorn the brow of a mother, and at other times will be vainly sought for on a girlish face; that expression which is like the beauty of a soul shining through a mortal veil, an expression which is not beauty, though it enhances its power tenfold, sanctifies and ennobles it so as to stand for it; and also for grandeur and majesty, as it lends dignity to the lowest fortune."

Lamberto, the lover of Lisa de' Lapi. Lisa, the second daughter, though only eighteen, shows on her face traces of carping care and anxiety. Lamberto, a fine fellow, brought up in Niccolò's household, has two years previously

asked Lisa to wait for him, whilst he carved a position for her to share. "Lamberto's plan to rise rapidly in the world by adopting the military profession offered many chances of success, provided he possessed the soldierly qualifications and that no untimely musket-ball should interfere. The *condottiere* system was still in full sway, and anyone had a chance of becoming a chief, if he could inspire sufficient confidence, and enjoy fame enough to induce companions to join his banner."

False Lisa's plight.

Lamberto has been bravely fighting his way to fame and wealth; he has loyally repulsed the violent passion of the beautiful courtesan Selvaggia; but Lisa has not kept true to her absent lover. A gay young nobleman, Troilo degli Ardinghelli, a friend and companion of the dissolute Medici, has persuaded her to a secret marriage, and now as she sits by Laudomia's side, amidst her father's stern friends, Lisa may well look anxious as she thinks of her husband, fighting in the enemy's camp, and of her babe concealed in the room upstairs.

A strange assembly of chiefs is this one sitting round old Niccolò de' Lapi: leaders of men, because each of them embodies one of the ideals of his countrymen. The Prior of San Marco, a saintly scholar; Francesco Ferruccio, who has discarded the yardstick to grasp the sword of command over all the Florentine forces in Tuscany. Stern resolves are made, bitter words are

uttered against the hated *Palleschi,* and when a messenger brings news of the beheading of one who said that Florence rightfully belonged to the Medici, these unflinching Christians are grimly content, yet before parting for the night they join in prayers "for our worst enemies."

Niccolò, left alone, is surprised by the return of Ferruccio, bearing a letter from the Chancellor Carducci. A denunciation having reached this supreme magistrate, he sends it to his trusted friend that he may clear himself. The old man finds ample confirmation of the letter when he bursts into his daughter's room and finds Lisa giving breast to her babe. With curses the mother and child are turned from the house into the dark street in a drizzling rain. There she is discovered by our old acquaintance Fanfulla, who on that very morning has left his convent and enlisted in the Florentine militia.

Niccolò curses his daughter.

Messer Troilo degli Ardinghelli is pleased with his wife's appearance in the camp under the escort of Fanfulla. It fits the plot between himself and Malatesta Baglioni, the Pope's emissary, that he should play repentance and enter the De' Lapi's household, there to spy out every move of the besieged. But it takes all Troilo's unblushing subtlety and all Malatesta's cunning to persuade Niccolò and Fanfulla that the wolf has become a lamb. On returning home with her husband and child, Lisa finds that her quondam

lover Lamberto has understood his own mind and has obtained Laudomia's hand.

Quaint "Piagnone" wedding ceremony.

It is a quaint wedding, the solemn *Piagnone* ceremony contrasting with the half pagan practices of an old servant to avert ill omens. Laudomia's happiness is soon ended. On the day of the wedding Lamberto is ordered to join Ferruccio in Empoli; Troilo, seized by lustful desire, and the jealous Selvaggia, have combined to part the married pair.

The fall of Florence, and the departure of Niccolò.

Only when the city has fallen once more in the hands of the detested *Palleschi,* and when two more of his sons have fallen in efforts to defend it, does Niccolò resolve to leave for Genoa, assured of the fulfilment of Savonarola's prophecy: "*Florentia post flaggella renovabitur.*"

The sacred relics are packed in a precious box and an entry of the event made in his diary; then the "old man sat down to rest, but his eye having caught the flicker of the lamp burning before the empty shrine, he rose and blew it out. This seemingly simple action agonized his blighted heart. Since the death of the Master this lamp had never been extinguished, and Niccolò at every hour of day and night, turned to it in his prayers."

Bindo, Troilo, Lamberto, and their wives; Fanfulla, a German follower of Lamberto, and an aged servant ride out of Florence and reach Gavinana on the second day. There they all dis-

mount, to pray on the spot where Ferruccio was slain.

Ambuscade and capture of Niccolò.

"While Niccolò pronounced some inspired words in honour of the dead hero; and his family, reverently kneeling, were intently listening to him, seven soldiers with swords in hand, followed by fifty armed peasants, rushed on them from the church; their hands were pinioned, dagger and sword points were at their throats, and a voice cried out: 'Whoever moves is a dead man! You are all prisoners of the Pope!' 'Prisoner of the Pope' meant death for Niccolò; yet the bitterest pang in this bitter hour is the sight of Troilo left free whilst they are all bound with fetters or ropes. 'He was a traitor!' Niccolò exclaims, and the dying Lisa also cries out: 'He was a traitor!'"

Lamberto and Laudomia are carried to a neighbouring castle, from which they are rescued by Lamberto's attendant and Fanfulla. Troilo meets appropriate punishment, and is flung alive into a fathomless pit; but the penitent Selvaggia is forgiven by her victims. Niccolò de' Lapi alone is brought back to Florence to a cell in the Bargello. Neither the spectacle of the block, raised in the central *Cortile* and dripping with his friend Carducci's blood, nor the sight of judges picked from among his enemies, daunt the old man's spirit. Torture only

stirs him to apostrophize his persecutors in prophetic accents.

Niccolò's last hours, and death.

Niccolò's last hours are spent in the chapel with the hooded Brethren, whose duty it is to pray and comfort the condemned. The golden light of the setting sun sends its oblique rays across the painted window-panes, the men surround Niccolò, they chant the psalms for the dying; one by one they approach him, and through the small openings of the *cappuccio* the old man sees the eyes of his sons and friends beaming on him with tenderness and devotion; they whisper their resolve to liberate him or die with him. But Niccolò bids them refrain from useless bloodshed. Between his son and Lamberto he calmly walks to the block, the venerated head is severed with one sharp blow of the axe, and the bereaved sons piously lay the body in its grave.

D'Azeglio's valuable autobiography.

Though D'Azeglio's novels have retained much of their popularity, there is growing preference for his unfinished autobiography, *I miei Ricordi*. Here indeed truth is presented to the reader with all the emotions they have excited in the author. A man of D'Azeglio's refinement never pretends to give us, *à la* Rousseau, the whole truth; he even warns us that there are topics which he entirely omits, but everything that he deems fit to be said he says with sincerity. Direct observation and accurate

reproduction lend to this unpretentious narrative of well-known facts the attraction of a familiar chat with an amiable and well-informed man. It suggests, too, a capacity for comprehension and penetration which are not evinced in D'Azeglio's novels.

The value of D'Azeglio's *Ricordi* is not easily overrated, since it answers to one of the highest ideals of a book: the revelation of a lovable spirit. *"On cherchait un auteur, on est très heureux de rencontrer un homme"* might have been written for him.

FRANCESCO DOMENICO GUERRAZZI

FRANCESCO DOMENICO GUERRAZZI.

FRANCESCO DOMENICO GUERRAZZI, the popular Romantic novelist, was born at Leghorn in August, 1804. His parents were so unkind to him that, when fourteen years old, he ran away from home. Within a twelvemonth he was a law student at the University of Pisa. In his *Memoirs* he describes his university training as "no learning at all and much persecution," to which should be added extensive though random readings and such irregular attendance at lessons as was then deemed sufficient for the obtaining of a lawyer's degree. *Guerrazzi's birth and education.*

As a barrister Guerrazzi soon became popular. Though coarse and bombastic, he was sometimes eloquent, and was feared as an opponent, if not desired as an advocate. Guerrazzi's power and his limitations are explained by the persistence of this double personality: as writer and as lawyer. Even in his novels he seems the lawyer for the prosecution, eager to convict somebody, and not particular as to his methods. *Guerrazzi as a lawyer.*

In 1828 he violently attacked the Grand-ducal Government, and was sentenced to six months' banishment to Montepulciano, a punishment which he bitterly resented. On returning from this first exile, Guerrazzi was acknowledged as *Guerrazzi an exile and insurrectionist.*

the leader of the most turbulent faction. After the events of 1831 he was imprisoned, and during his enforced leisure wrote his ponderous novel, *The Siege of Florence,* a clamourous success.

Made a Cabinet Minister, then imprisoned.

When the Grand-duke of Tuscany tried to prop his tottering throne with a liberal government he gave Guerrazzi a portfolio in his cabinet, but he was soon dismissed and imprisoned. This was rather to save him from the fury of the mob than with purpose of punishment. Indeed, the sentence was immediately commuted into exile to the neighbouring island of Corsica.

Upon his release he retired to his country-place near Cecina, "La Cinquantina," a broken and disappointed man, "tired at heart and soured in mind, enjoying the companionship of the sea, the windy forest, and malaria, vainly courting peace."

Nor was Guerrazzi more successful in private life. He shunned the responsibility of marriage, but neither the vulgar companion who shared his fortune, nor the nephew he adopted, gave him joy in return for his fitful but genuine attachment.

Guerrazzi's literary characteristics.

Guerrazzi's literary production is significantly shaped by the same causes as his life. He created nothing, but intensified every wave of thought, every fount of emotion. A good actor, he felt his *rôle*, and rendered it with the gesture

and intonations suggested by the presence of an interested audience. If he misses this audience he becomes dull, and is bewildered at the sudden loss of favour. Having met Lord Byron in Pisa, he expresses his unbounded admiration:

His admiration for Lord Byron.

"Report had spread that the most extraordinary man had come to Pisa. People spoke of him in a thousand different ways. He was of royal descent, powerful and wealthy, ferocious and bloodthirsty by nature, yet preeminent in every chivalrous feat; a genius of evil, and at the same time of superhuman intellect; he wandered like Job's Satan all over the world, to espy if anyone were bold enough to slander him in God's presence. This man was Lord Byron. I saw him; he was like the Apollo of the Vatican. 'If this man is bad,' said I, 'God is a deceiver; as I will never believe that the Creator has lodged an evil soul in such a beautiful body.'"

Guerrazzi influenced by the Romantic movement.

This gushing admiration for Byron directed Guerrazzi's attention to the whole Romantic movement. The shadow of Manfred's gloom has darkened many of his pages, but Victor Hugo and the French *Romantiques* provided Guerrazzi with his model of an historical novel. The same absence of genuine feeling, the same lack of historical comprehension exhibited by *Notre-Dame de Paris,* is found in *The Siege of Florence.* A crowd of personages swarm across the scene, strange figures start into har-

"The Siege of Florence."

rowing or ludicrous attitudes, then disappear without leaving a clue to their real meaning.

Guerrazzi's imitation of Victor Hugo.

There is Pieruccio, so evidently imitated from Victor Hugo! "Who is Pieruccio? Nobody can tell whether he dropped down from the sky or whether the earth had erupted him as a volcano casts out a stone; no one knew his age; grief had anticipated the age of decrepitude, time had found no wrinkle to add, no outline to blur; neither the inclemency of storms nor of ill health could touch him. When Savonarola preached, he would like a dog crouch under the pulpit whence now and then he uttered awful sobs, which people at first would mistake for voices calling out from the womb of earth wherein the bones of their forefathers stirred under the accents of the powerful word. He prophesied the dawn and fall of Liberty in Florence. Towards sunset he would fill the town with his appalling shrieks, then disappear, and where he went was a mystery, as all tyrants had often and in vain striven to find him."

None of the usual ingredients of Romance are wanting in Guerrazzi's novels. Dead men return to life, lunatics recover their wits, innocence is outraged and vice triumphant; all the startling contrasts, all the incoherency which had glittered in its newness under the magic pen of the masters, is wearisomely rehearsed in this astounding *olla podrida.*

From Shelley's drama, *The Cenci,* he took the subject of his *Beatrice Cenci,* and as much of the spirit as he could appropriate, but failed to grasp the significance of his model. A poet does more than present historic facts and personages: he creates characters illumined with the light of his own soul. This Shelley has done, and this Guerrazzi could not do. They both lack historic accuracy; yet this deficiency is hardly more felt in Shelley's than in Shakespeare's plays; for his personages live and breathe and speak. But though Guerrazzi has painfully read the documents he failed to grasp the significance of the picture.

His novel "Beatrice Cenci" imitated from Shelley's drama.

The outline of this gloomy story is well known. Count Francesco Cenci, having violated his daughter Beatrice, is found murdered in his palace. A papal court of justice sentences to death all the members of his family, on suspicion of having committed or ordered the murder. The riches and lands of the Cenci are forfeited to the Holy See.

The story of the Cenci.

To Shelley's mind the beauty of the subject lay in the contrast between the actual guilt and the moral innocence of the wretched girl. Guerrazzi emphasizes the cruelty and rapacity of the judges who tormented the maiden into confessing a crime she had not committed. Shelley, in one short scene, delineates the powerful figure of Count Francesco Cenci, a monster in human

Shelley's conception contrasted with Guerrazzi's.

form. The figure is appalling as a nightmare, and prepares our consent to Beatrice's action. Guerrazzi shows us, more minutely but less truly, the villain plotting his own son's ruin, and blaspheming outrageously.

Beatrice and her crippled brother Virgilio are sitting on a terrace overlooking the gardens of Palazzo Cenci. They speak of past and present misery, and find comfort in each other's affection. As she bends over the railings and points to a distant church where their mother is buried, Beatrice drops a paper and a locket which had been concealed in her bodice. Urged by her agonized cry, the boy vaults over the railings, and, clutching at some jutting ornaments, glides down into the garden and grasps the paper and portrait.

"'Come here!' cries the enraged father. 'Come here with those two things! Cursed viper! . . . . Bring me the paper . . . . directly! If I get hold of thee I'll tear out thy heart with my own hands! Nero!' he cries. 'Nero, there! at him! . . . . at him!' and with both hands he excites the bloodhound against his crippled son." The dog springs furiously. Virgilio thinks that he can feel the cruel teeth in his own flesh as he rushes up the stairs, and, panting, falls senseless at his sister's feet. The paper and portrait are hastily hidden in the girl's bosom.

The bloodhound reaches the terrace; its eyes glitter like burning embers, its breath rises like

smoke. Beatrice snatches a sword from a panoply of antique weapons in a niche close by, and cuts through the head of the horrible beast. The dog welters in blood and dies with a horrid howl. Count Francesco comes up, livid with passion, dagger in hand, almost speechless with rage. ". . . . Where is the evil viper? . . . . Damnation! . . . . Who killed Nero? . . . . Who?" "I have." "Well then . . . . Thou also . . . . but no! first this viper." He bends over his son, and would stab him. Beatrice points the bloody blade at Francesco's heart, whilst in accents that cannot be rendered, she says:

Melodramatic scene between Cenci and Beatrice.

". . . . Father! . . . . stand back!"

". . . . Make way . . . . stand off, you wicked girl!" He tries to get at the boy.

". . . . Stand back . . . . Father!"

"Her wide-open eyes dart living flames, her dilated nostrils are throbbing! Her lips tightly pressed, her bosom panting, her dishevelled hair streaming down her shoulders! Her left foot is firmly set; her head lifted, her body upright; her left hand clenched; and her right hand, armed with the sword, is resting on her hip already in action! Neither painter nor sculptor could ever represent this beautiful appearance. Language cannot render it. The maiden beams so radiant that she dazzles mortal eyes.

"Francesco Cenci stood entranced, dropped his weapon, and for one short instant his soul was

softened. Beatrice too had discarded her sword. The old man stretched out towards her his open arms, and exclaimed: 'How beautiful thou art! Why can'st thou not love me?' . . . . 'I! . . . . I do love you.' . . . . And she flies to his arms! Such fatherly feelings cannot last long in the fiend's heart. He whispers in her ear a few words which make her, with a shudder, break from his disgusting embrace."

Is it possible that such turgid nonsense could have been accepted in Italy as great writing?

Guerrazzi's deficient taste. The best measure of Guerrazzi's deficient taste is found in the banquet scene. By translating into high-sounding, harmonious Italian some passages of Shelley's, he has given an impressive picture. Cenci here appears the embodiment of all evil passions. In Shelley's lines Count Francesco pledges his guests to drink of the wine that

> . . . . bubbles gaily in this golden bowl
> Under the lamplight, as my spirits do
> To hear the death of my accursed sons.
> Could I believe thou wert their mingled blood
> Then would I taste thee like a sacrament.

Why has Guerrazzi marred the austere simplicity of his model and introduced a pathetic and unlikely episode?—Beatrice rescuing her father from the vengeance of one of his followers.

Contrasted with Shelley's poetical intuition. Shelley had a poetical intuition of what the daughter of a Cenci must be like. Sweet and

innocent she may be, but lurking in her veins is the passion of her race. Shall she kill herself or the offender?

" . . . . Death! Death! our law and our religion call thee,
A punishment and a reward. Oh, which
Have I deserved."
" To God I have talked with my own heart.
And have unravelled my entangled will,
And have at length determined what is right."

The action of Guerrazzi's "Cenci" lacks directness.

The Italian novel is far from this classical directness. We have pages of romantic episodes, plots and counterplots, murders and flights; robber-caves, *carbonari* holding midnight councils, before we reach the important event—Francesco's murder by a lover of Beatrice.

Guerrazzi had a grudge against the magistrates of his time and a dislike for priests. This trial of an innocent afforded opportunity to rail at his own enemies. Beatrice, though innocent, confesses herself guilty, hoping to save her brothers and stepmother. There are long descriptions of her last days in prison, and finally the funeral procession to the scaffold, and ghastly particulars of the execution.

Guerrazzi's short stories: "The Duchess of San Giuliano."

In Guerrazzi's short stories he is often luminous and evinces power. *The Duchess of San Giuliano* is the best of these—a tale of love and vengeance told with terseness and sobriety. Veronica Cibo, wife of Salviati, Duke of San

Giuliano, discovers her husband's amours with Caterina Canacci, the fair daughter of a *popolano*. She goes to her rival's house, and, after stabbing her, cuts off the beautiful head and sends it to the Duke, inside the basket containing his fresh linen.

"The Little Snake."

Another successful tale is entitled *The Little Snake*. It is a jewel of reconstruction, an imitation of the old Italian *novella*, spiced with the wit that savoured the ancient French *fabliaux*. It is the story of a mountaineer who in the late autumn comes upon a little snake half frozen to death. He picks it up, places it in a warm hole in the rock, and kindly covers the opening with handfuls of straw. In the spring, as the good man is ascending the steep path to his mountain home, he hears a voice: "Halloa! stop, you villain!" So he stops, bewildered, and presently sees before him a reptile which, though wonderfully grown and threatening, he knows is his little snake.

"Oh, good day to you, *Comare!* God bless you! How well you are looking!" says the poor man, trying to look brave in spite of his quaking heart. "Goodness, you are grown to be a great lady! Have you set up a coach and pair, that you speak so proudly?" "The worse for you," says the snake, curling her crest, opening wide her eyes. She crosses the road, and, darting her forked tongue at him, she hisses in

his face: "Say your prayers, for you must die!" A wordy discussion ensues, imitating and ridiculing the lawyer's harangue, and finally the dog is appealed to as judge, and decides for the snake; the horse confirms the decree, but the man appeals to the ape as the court of last resort.

Down comes the ape from the tree, and pleasantly discusses the case with the snake. "Now tell me, *Carina,* where did the mountaineer find you almost frozen to death?" "Here across this path." "All right! Now, did he take thee by the the tail and did he carry thee here?" "Just so." "And did he tell thee to lie there in this hole?" "In this very hole. Here it is." "How couldst thou manage to get in, I would like to know?" "It cannot hold me now." "Just try a bit, *Carina.*" "I'll do my best." The snake, straightening herself with great efforts, gradually curled in. Then the ape, nimble and swift, took up a great stone, and, laying it on the hole, said: "Now you may stay there till I come back for you."

"The Hole in the Wall": a humourous tale.

Guerrazzi's little story, *The Hole in the Wall,* is one of the few specimens of Italian humour produced at the beginning of the century. It is a page of Guerrazzi's own life. Uncle Orazio, though sweeter tempered than his author, has been scolding his nephew Marcello and ordering him out of his sight. The young penitent dutifully repairs to a garret, in another part of the town, wherein he means to begin life anew.

But he soon comes back to his uncle, and tells his adventures.

"I had no sooner been shown to my new lodgings than I ran down again the fourteen flights of stairs to buy some matches and necessary crockery. I espied a hawker crying out engravings at four cents apiece. I thought I might afford one to decorate my room, and was suddenly struck by the face of a Madonna beaming as like as two drops of water to my dear mother's portrait." Here the young man's emotion choked his utterance and tears filled his eyes. Orazio blew, or pretended to blow, his nose noisily. Marcello, on recovering his composure, went on:

"Yes, sir, exactly like my blessed mother! I made my purchase and went up again. In ten minutes and sixteen seconds everything had been settled cosily in my lodgings; the picture alone remained to be placed. It seemed irreverent to expose it to the outrages of dust and flies; I remembered then how the Church has introduced the custom of concealing sacred objects from the habitual gaze of worshippers, lest familiarity breed indifference. I imitated the Church. In the entrance-room was a closet closed by a door. Here was a shrine as sacred as a pyx and wholly consecrated to maternal worship. I resolved that it should contain nothing else, my principal reason being that I possessed nothing else to put

there. With a stone for a hammer I drove in a nail. But the point of my nail piercing through a joint, the plaster gave way, as if it had been cream cheese, and a great hole was made."

Of course through that hole the young man perceives the heroine, whom the good-natured and benignant uncle in good time receives into the family.

Guerrazzi's power as a humourist.

In this second manner Guerrazzi was original: Sterne's Uncle Toby does not resemble Uncle Orazio, and Jean Paul's aphorisms have not been borrowed from. Some of the piquancy and shrewdness of these masters of humour is lacking, but there is a compensating absence of that coarseness which sometimes escapes their pen.

Had Guerrazzi devoted his efforts to the writing of such stories his fame would probably be greater to-day, and Italy would be able to boast of at least one great humourist.

TOMMASO GROSSI

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IF untiring industry, capacity for assimilation, goodness, gentleness, much reading, were the only gifts required to make a poet and novelist, few would have been greater than Tommaso Grossi. He was born in Belamo, Lake Como. At the University of Pisa he got little Latin, less soup, plenty of blows, and finally his degree as a lawyer. He died in 1853.

Tommaso Grossi's birth and education.

Grossi's rhymed romances, *Ildegarda* and *The Crusaders,* once so popular, are now forgotten. Carefully and cleverly he used Manzoni and Walter Scott as models. His heroines were appropriately love-sick or consumptive; lines of rapture or despair were stuck in at proper places; his heroes were frantically devoted, recklessly brave; his plots exaggerated and irrational, his style stilted. Yet when his subscribers found fault he was surprised by their criticism. Had he not faithfully accomplished his task? Had he not mended some of the failings that had been noticed in his model?

His rhymed romances.

It seems so easy to study a masterpiece, pick out its beauties, inhale its spirit, and then industriously reconstruct it. Other productions of human skill grow better by repetition; why must

the mind renew its materials as well as its methods?

His novel, "Marco Visconti," still admired.

The poems of Grossi are forgotten, but his novel, *Marco Visconti,* still has some admirers. Like *Promessi Sposi,* this is a story of love, set in an historical frame. The heroine, Bice del Balzo, married to Ottorino Visconti, is abducted by the zealous retainers of Marco Visconti, her rejected suitor, and imprisoned in a castle. When rescued by Marco himself, she dies, pathetically bidding her husband forgive. To complicate the plot, Marco Visconti formerly loved Bice's mother, Countess Ermelinda. This intricate love-making is conducted in the decorous manner appropriate to the Milan of Grossi's time, but hardly in keeping with the rude customs and fierce passions of fourteenth-century lovers.

"Marco Visconti" merely a gorgeous show.

The volume presents a gorgeous pageantry, faultless in detail, harmonious in development, with finished touches of light and shade, but never a real event enacted by living personages. From the great controversy between Pope John XXII., then resident in Avignon, and Antipope Nicholas V., reigning in Rome, down to the petty quarrel between a feudal abbot and his vassals in Limonta, tilts, jousts, feastings, fightings, all are described; and the information given as to mediæval Italian customs is amazing. One of these interesting customs is called the "Judgment of God." It is enacted in the village of Limonta

Description of the "Judgment of God."

in 1329, to settle a disputed question of feudal right between the villagers and their suzerain, the Abbot of St. Ambrose.

The central part of the village piazza forms the lists. Everywhere the crowd of villagers and soldiers press eagerly. All eyes are turned to the loggia of the Episcopal Palace, where a judge is sitting, attended by two lawyers. The two champions appear on the loggia; they swear to use no unfair arts in the battle, and they receive from the magistrate their weapons, a wooden buckler and a cudgel.

"Before the duel began a voice from the crowd cried: 'The weapons must be blessed!' The magistrate stood up and said: 'Your curate declines to perform the ceremony, because of the Interdiction.' Cries, howls, hisses broke from the multitude. 'The curate is right!' shout the villagers, who held for the Pope. 'The curate must give the blessing, whether he likes it or not!' bawl the soldiers, followers of the Antipope.

"'Yes!' 'No!' 'Yes!' 'No!'—a very Babel of cries.

"The judge tried to conciliate: 'If anyone will impart the blessing, there is a silver mark for him.'

"The priests, standing in the crowd, suddenly disappeared, but soon there swelled a cry: 'Tremacoldo! The minstrel!'

"Poet, juggler, and buffoon, Tremacoldo was also a churchman, the canon of Treviglio. . . . .

"Presently the minstrel emerged from the Episcopal Palace, attended by two soldiers. Preparatory to the religious ceremony, Tremacoldo demands a flagon of the Bishop's wine, and quaffs some with clownish quips and jokes.

"'Now the canonicals, a missal, and some holy water.' From the vestry two soldiers bring the sacerdotal robes to the minstrel. Tremacoldo puts on the richest *piviale* and asks for a *calotte*.

"'We haven't found any.'

"'Then my fool's cap will do.'

"Tremacoldo chatters and gambols, making absurd gestures over the weapons, twisting his body to set his bells jingling; striving by this foolery to please the crowd, without really breaking the Interdiction. Taking the sprinkler from the hands of his extempore acolyte he pours the dregs of wine into a soldier's helmet, then with the sprinkler he lavishly asperges the weapons and ends with a clownish gambol." The duel then proceeds, ending with the Abbot's champion being carried nearly dead from the lists.

Grossi shows delicacy in some short passages.

Better than in these elaborate reproductions, Grossi is to be admired in a few passages where with real delicacy he writes the short and simple annals of the poor. In a hut by the lake shore two aged parents are weeping the death of their only son, drowned during a storm. The thatched

roof is low, the floor sodden earth, a fireplace in the middle of the hut, a solitary bed, a rough dresser and table.

"Close by the table, under the iron lamp hanging from the roof, old Marta sits and spins. Her face is bony, furrowed by a few wrinkles, her resolute movements reveal a spirit undaunted by poverty. Her brow is darkened, her cheeks are pale, and her eyes swollen, bleared by recent grief. Her lips move in prayer, but there is no sound. Now and then she would look at the empty bed, then lift her brimming eyes heavenwards, as if imploring God to take her to her Arrigozzo. Michele is sitting by the fireplace, with his back to the table. He mixes the porridge of milk and wheat.

"When half an hour had thus passed the old woman rose from her chair, laid down her distaff, and took the pot from the fire, then, as she stood before the dresser engrossed in her prayers, her hand mechanically performing all the habitual movements, she set the three dishes on the table, with a spoon near each, and ladled out the soup in all three, saying: 'Michele, are you coming?' Even while her husband walked up to the table, she saw her mistake, and hastened to remove one of the dishes, and set it on the ground, as if for the little dog. Michele caught the hasty and distracted movement, he noticed the third spoon lying there for the dead son, and

taking his own dish he turned again to his place, with his back to the table."

The desolate meal proceeds in silence; then the afflicted parents scold each other for not eating, they try to encourage each other, and find some comfort in spending their last coins to have a mass said for the dear departed soul.

"Marco Visconti" weak imitation of "Promessi Sposi."

Grossi's *Marco Visconti* is a weak imitation of *Promessi Sposi.* But the novelist Giulio Carcano with a lachrymose *Angiola Maria,* and Rosini with an ineffectual attempt to appropriate the Manzonian character to the *Nun of Monza,* mark the lowest ebb of the school that was destined to rise again with Antonio Fogazzaro and the small but select group of modern Manzonians.

IPPOLITO NIEVO

IPPOLITO NIEVO

SELDOM has it been granted a man to so represent his age and to be so identified with his environment that it is impossible to separate his personality from that of his time and country. The very name of Ippolito Nievo is an evocation of the romantic and rebellious, heroic and imprudent, Italy of the early half of the nineteenth century.

Nievo truly represents his age and country.

Whether we see him defying the rigour of an Austrian tribunal, or donning the red shirt to follow Garibaldi and his thousand heroes in search of a soldier's death, his was ever the same heart, his was ever the same faith, that rang in his verse and quivered in the romance wherein he revealed himself as he would have wished to be! Nievo sang of that period as a poet, lived through it as a soldier, and described it in a masterpiece. His life, his novel, and his Italy are typical; each explains the other.

Like a hero of some legend, like a personage of romance, to utter a cry, to wield a sword, to love and to be loved; and then in the fulness of joy on the morrow of victory and eve of glory, his head crowned with war-like laurel and the halo of martyrdom, he made his exit, wrapt in a death that lends immortality to his youth. The

His achievement and his mysterious death.

blue waves of the reconquered sea piously concealed his agony, and kept the secret of that mysterious shipwreck.

Nievo's purpose in his novel.

To depict this double evolution of the man and his environment was Nievo's purpose in writing his romance, *The Memoirs of a Man of Eighty*. Doubtless, too, he was impelled to reveal to the world, in words vibrating with pathos, passion, and sincerity, the birth, growth, and fruition of that wonderful love which had absorbed and inspired his own life. Marvellously has he succeeded in both intentions.

Nievo begins: "I was born a *Venetian* in the year 1775; I will die an *Italian* whenever it please an overruling Providence. This narrative," he continues, "of an individual life does not presume to be the history of a nation, but rather a foot-note pinned at the bottom of an official document. . . . . The private activity of one individual, who has been neither so selfish as to live apart, entrenched against public troubles, nor so stoical as to ignore them, nor so wise as to spurn them, will, methinks, represent the general activity of his fellow creatures as correctly as the falling of one drop represents the drift of a shower."

In order to succeed in this double purpose, of presenting in a complete and harmonious whole both the psychological study and the historical picture, Nievo required not only to thoroughly

possess his subject, but also intuitively to know those profound affinities that determine human relations. His imagination must soar to embrace the whole scheme and return earthward to reconstruct the details.

Life of Carlo Altoviti.

This Nievo accomplishes in his novel, where each phasis in the life of Carlo Altoviti answers to an historical period; each stage of the national evolution corresponds with a crisis in his life. His childhood is spent in the midst of the obsolete feudal Venetian world, in the Frioul; his boyhood is stirred by the warlike tumult of the French invasion, is fascinated by the glamour of revolutionary principles; his youth blossoms during the early storms of the first risings and the tempests of Romanticism; his manhood ripens during the ensuing lull; his quiet and smiling old age gazes on the first dawn of Italian life, and rejoices in the prosperity and in the grandeur of his country.

The synchronic evolutions of Carlo and of the national life each completes, each explains the other; each is felt as a reciprocal immanent force. Always in the torrent of social progress, we are shown this atom impelled by the flood, yet in his turn directing and transforming the society of which he is a part.

First ten chapters pages from Nievo's life.

The first ten chapters of the novel are the strongest. They have been written with abounding love and with intimate knowledge; they

are pages from Nievo's own life. The action takes place in the Castle of Fratta and in the surrounding Frioul, a part of the Venetian state. It is a wonderful picture of feudal Venetian life at the close of the eighteenth century, mouldering in such sloth that nothing could save it from ruin.

Description of Castle Fratta. The castle is a huge, straggling structure "enclosed by ditches, wherein the sheep grazed or the frogs croaked, according to the season. The walls are mantled with ivy, so fantastically clothed with garlands and festoons that the rich color of its ancient battlements can hardly be distinguished." Inside the castle the kitchen, mysteriously grand and dark, its walls grimy with the unbesomed soot of centuries, over which bright brass kettles and pans glared like ghastly eyes. At nightfall this cavern is lighted by the double brightness of votive lamps, burning before images of saints, and huge armfuls of fagots blazing in the monumental chimneyplace as the lordly inhabitants of the castle take their seats around it.

Characters of the novel. The Count of Fratta, in a periwig and long riding-coat, booted and spurred for the ride he never takes, a scabbard innocent of sword dangling at his side, presides here, attended by his brother, Monsignor Orlando, a fat canon, contented embodiment of the Church, and by a dwarfish, squinty, fidgety imp that embodies the

judicial power, and Captain Sandracca, commander-in-chief of inoffensive militia, and Marchetto, lord-chancellor, public crier, bailiff, and sometimes even executioner—these represent the lawful powers. But the personage most typical of the age and place is a little man with low, sly mien and mysterious ways, half clerk and half sacristan, whose very presence makes men quake and grow cautious—the secret agent of the Council of Venice.

Secondary characters of the novel.

About these principal personages a group of clients, visitors, and servants crowd in apparent confusion, yet with such selection of detail that each figure is characterized and individualized. Among these menials is the deaf and taciturn Martino, "who haunts the kitchen as a superannuated hound sticks to the pack." All day long he scrapes and scrapes the cheese required for the capacious caldrons of macaroni. The Curate of Teglio, a square-built mountaineer, clothed in the longest gown of homespun that ever flapped over priestly calves, speaks with deliberation, so carefully dividing his speech into three parts, that he even coughs, spits, and blows his nose in triplets.

The Dowager Countess of Fratta.

The ladies seldom appeared in the kitchen. "Only the Countess makes regular descents, to dictate her orders in a harsh, dry voice, deal out the stores, and gratify Carlino with a hair-pull. She takes huge pinches of snuff through one

nostril at a time, and moves to the clinking bunch of keys dangling by her side. . . . . I have afterwards heard that she had reluctantly married a clodhopper nobleman of 'terra firma,' being herself born in Venice and bred to its pleasures."

In memory of this pleasant past she still wears the miniature portrait of the gallant youth who has been her *cavaliere servente*. She hates to see other people happy; her brother-in-law, Monsignor Orlando, particularly enrages her, because content to live with two hands fondly folded on his fat belly. "It may be," suggests the writer, "that the divergence in their points of view originated in this: that Monsignor Orlando, having set all his delight in his stomach, could still in old age enjoy them, whilst my Lady Countess . . . . well, let us not profane the mortal remains purified by half a century's rest in the tomb."

The Dowager Countess, living within her rooms, was seldom seen by Carlo, yet she stirred his heart to a passionate veneration. Once this grand lady was ambassadress in France, the reigning belle at the Court of Versailles. "On her home-coming to Fratta she had preserved the same gentleness, the same noble conscience, the same purity, the same moderation; though she had lost the bloom of beauty, she continued to charm the hearts of her neighbours and vassals as she had enslaved the courtiers of Louis

the Fourteenth." Clara, the eldest daughter, is her grandmother's constant attendant, and only on rare occasions brightened by her presence the somber kitchen.

Daily life at Castle Fratta.

Every morning Monsignor Orlando celebrated mass in the chapel. There "my lord the Count would kneel in solitary grandeur in the chapel, gravely acknowledging the deep obeisance of Monsignor, both on his entrance and on his exit." When mass was over, the faithful would wait for my lord the Count to take his leave of the altar "with a little familiar nod." Then followed the Countess and the other members of the family, who bent one knee in sign of reverence, whilst the servants used to fall on both knees. There was the daily ceremonial walk, the traditional play at cards in the Countess' sitting-room, the solemn procession slowly ascending the stately stairs at bedtime.

Last struggles between cities and nobility.

This district of Frioul witnessed the last struggle between the cities, enfeebled by the meanness of puny heads, and the feudal lords of the neighbourhood, that still retained in their pay the *bravi* and armed followers of more warlike times. Having reason to mistrust the superior authority, each one tried to obtain justice or to overpower the others by his own efforts. Hence perpetual private quarrels; hence the humbleness of the town councils before the neighbouring gentry;

"a despicable servility, result of that natural law which makes the weak slaves of the strong."

Spaccafumo, the outlaw and friend of the people.

This unrest and misrule creates the character of Spaccafumo, who has been outlawed for trying to save a poor old woman from the talons of the tax-gatherer. Yet he goes to mass in the church of his native village and remains for supper with some of the chief inhabitants. Exerting liberal and democratic justice against the petty tyrants of the district, he finds an ally in every countryman, and even in every soldier and bailiff.

In the evening, sitting round the fireplace at Castle Fratta, Captain Sandracca, with a shrug of his shoulders, comments on the news that oozes even to this secluded nook. The French army! Pooh! Our Schiavoni will rid us of them in a twinkling! Bonaparte! Why, that is a name invented! A mere scarecrow, behind which some old general is concealing his terror of defeat in the next campaign! Naturally this bombast does not prevent the *matamore* from scampering away at the first intelligence of the enemy's advance.

French occupation of Portogruaro.

A whole chapter, the tenth, is filled with an account of the French occupation of Portogruaro and with the pillage of Castle Fratta, of which Carlo, Monsignor Orlando, the centenarian Dowager, and the servants are the only occupants. The others have gone to Venice, where my lady the Countess drains for the card-table

the last pennies of her money, her daughter Clara prepares to enter a convent, and the son, Rinaldo, is wrapped in erudite researches. All are helpless to prevent or even comprehend the impending catastrophe to these ancient walls, already tottering under the burden of debt, mortgage, and approaching ruin.

The little neighbouring town has caught the infection of the French Revolution. As Napoleon's troops approach, amidst wild shouts of "Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality!" the people have planted a tree of liberty in the public piazza. There is wild confusion, and in the midst of the turmoil the mob is about to burst open the doors of the public granary when suddenly, with clattering of hoofs and rumbling of wheels, a body of French troops swoops down on the hamlet.

Pillage of Castle Fratta.

Pillage now proceeds with order, and the villagers and peasants, though hungry and discontented, continue to cry: "Long live France! Hurrah for Liberty!" The village of Fratta too is plundered; everywhere are signs of recent orgies. Within the castle there is awful darkness and suspense: curtains torn down, doors burst open, furniture overturned. From the blackness of the Dowager's room comes a dreadful sound—a short, ominous breath, a ceaseless moan, mixture of the wild beast's roar and a child's wailing. Then the rustling of a body struggling painfully to rise.

That which the dying woman does not reveal is too horrible for words. In sorrow, in despair, in agony, even the faith of the old Countess is gone. There is no God! Else such things could not be. Thus dies the noble Countess Badoera, and thus the society whose ornament she had been was also to pass away. This shameful, deserted, despairing exit was the end doomed for the Venetian Republic.

Death of Countess Dowager.

A thorough shifting of the scene for Carlo Altoviti. A wealthy, noble-born, and legitimate father appears at the right moment, and opens wide for him the doors of the Maggior Consiglio, so that he may witness the downfall of Venice.

Carlo discovers his father.

He describes the tragically comical meeting of the Secret Council, after the French occupation of the Venetian estuary. The Doge Manin, "with one hand clutching at the belt-band of his ample pantaloon," uttering the historical sentence: "To-night we are not safe to sleep in our beds." Nievo also narrates the final scene. "The Doge rose pale and trembling, in the presence of the Great Council whose chief he was, yet to whom he was proposing an unprecedented cowardice. . . . . For half such a crime Marino Faliero had been beheaded, but Ludovico Manin continued to dishonour the Great Council, his country and himself, yet no man lifted his hand to pluck the ducal mantle from his shoulders, and to smash his head on these same stone flags that

The Doge Manin and the fall of Venice.

had seen the ambassadors of kings and the messengers of popes bend their knees."

After Campoformio, the warships, the trade vessels, and even fittings in the Arsenal are embarked for Toulon; the Bucentaur is stripped of its gildings; Venice appears like a graveyard where vultures are waiting to spoil the corpses.

Napoleon's invasion consolidated Italy.

And yet it was not unmixed evil which Napoleon brought to Italy. By compelling the entire nation to join in his activity, the Imperial Conqueror prepared the future evolution of the nation and stirred Italian energies. "At that time a superior intellect did all the thinking for us, a superior will dominated all our wills, so that with a very small outlay of ideas great things were achieved. . . . . We had but to obey and we saw a wonderful vitality grow out of our ancient ruins. I do not indulge in hypothesis, yet I believe that if only we had so continued for another twenty years we should have been taught to live; intellectual power must have awakened as a consequence of material activity, just as we see that such things will happen in a convalescence."

The revolt of Italy from French rule.

Order, discipline, justice—a growing prosperity and the establishment of a regular army—might have reconciled Italy to the French Cisalpine Republic. But when the benefactor, the liberator, proclaimed a kingdom; and when, seizing the iron crown with sacrilegious hand,

he uttered the empty words, "God has given it to me, woe to him who would take it away," then patriots answered: "We too have consciences, and woe to him who tramples upon them."

Novel historically and psychologically accurate.

No history could present a more accurate or more vivid description of the political and social life in the Italian Venezia, during those early years of the nineteenth century, than this romance of Nievo's which we have briefly resumed. But it is more than a history of a political movement, more than a vivid picture of the social life of the times. It is a marvelous revelation of personality; a psychological study; full of reality, power, and modernity. It lives! That double duo, Pisana and Carlo, Clara and Lucilio, chant a wonderful hymn to the master passion—Love.

Here Nievo's youth, the passionate romanticism of his time, the sensuous vitality of his race, quiver and throb. Here poet's imagination, lover's emotion, hero's passion are all presented. Here is complete analysis, penetrating observation.

Nievo's story is intensely human.

Nievo's story starts at the beginning of these lives and continues to the end. He avoids no difficulty, disguises no contradiction, scorns petty artifice. He encompasses, understands, and relates everything about these people, and suggests that indefinite, intangible something which is the very soul of living, throbbing humanity.

Other psychologists generally limit their ef-

forts to introducing people whose personalities have already attained their development; they play their *rôle,* then step from the stage, and the curtain drops. At best the more conscientious resume in a few preliminary pages the personal experiences, the thousand influences, that have enlarged or restricted the mental and moral growth of their characters; just enough to illumine the passing crisis of life which is described, and on which our attention is expected to converge. But Nievo's personages from the very first moment stand out as a whole. No sooner are they evoked than they live, live intensely, both individually and also as part of the universal life.

Altoviti is a portrait of Nievo.

In the work of a writer so athirst with sincerity, one of the personages should be a portrait of the author and the confession of his soul. Carlo Altoviti is what Ippolito Nievo would have been had he lived the life he narrates. The dream of the one is the reality of the other. Nievo's short life was filled with activity, but his psychic activity becomes even more wonderful when we consider that his thirty years have contained the whole evolution of Carlo's eighty. He has not only plucked out of himself the whole matter, feelings, emotions, thoughts, and opinions, all the mental and passionate life of this literary creation, but he has had something of

his own personality left over for other characters.

Carlo's first appearance. Carlo is only ten days old when his mother leaves him at the gate of her brother's Castle of Fratta in the Venetian territory, and offers no clue as to the legitimacy of his birth. The family consider a nurse for the foundling superfluous. "I was entrusted to the care of Providence; that is to say, I was carried about from house to house wherever there was chance of my getting suck; accordingly I am not only the foster brother of all the human creatures that were born in the neighbourhood at the time, but also of every calf, kid, and lamb; my nurses having been, besides the mothers and cows and ewes and goats of the village, all the old gossips who volunteered to give me a spoonful of pap or to aid my first tottering steps."

His first awakening to consciousness is equally eclectic. A whole declining world, an entire moral conception, a complete social ordainment that has lasted through centuries and is now about to be swept away, moulds and shapes by example and influence the mind of the boy, who sits unnoticed in a corner judging them, observing them, and understanding them, yet always loving them.

Three-year-old Pisana appears. Pisana is only three years old when shown us through the fond impression of her seven-year-old adorer, and already that love has begun

which will prove stronger than life for her, stronger than death for Carlo. "I never went to bed without first leaning long on her crib to look at her as she lay there, her big eyes shut, one of her little arms lying on the coverlet, the other encircling her head, like that of a sleeping cherub. Yet even whilst I rejoiced in the sight of her beauty, suddenly she would jump out of her bed and box my ears, and laugh with glee for having thus cheated me with pretended sleep." *The love of Carlo and Pisana.*

The Contessina and Carlo grow up together in the bracing liberty of country life. The precocious coquette flirts with all the urchins in the neighbourhood; playing at marriage and divorce, quarrels and reconciliations; the favourite of the moment is never the same for two days at a time. She is often enticed to lying, in her desire to retain the love of those about her. Such was her aptitude for inventing stories and acting a part, that often she could not have told where the truth ended and where the artifice began. Luckily for both children, outside Castle Fratta there is ample expanse of woodland, buzzing with insects' wings, chirp of birds, and cries of animals, bright with sunshine and alive with running waters, and sweeping poplars tossing their foliage against a deep blue sky. Luckily their slumbering souls instinctively crave these healthy influences, they feel and understand the voices of the earth. *The childhood of Carlo and Pisana* *Untruthfulness of Pisana.*

Passionate childish episode.

Among all the episodes of this passionate childhood there is one which the old man recalls with the deepest emotion, as the beginning of that "bitter, disordered, convulsed bliss which was first to devour my soul, then to renovate it."

During one of his excursions Carlino has rambled far away to the seashore. Absorbed in this first view of the boundless sea, the boy is unconscious of passing time, and at nightfall he is still standing there. Trembling and dismayed in the dark, he vainly tries to find his way across country. By the help of the outlaw Spaccafumo he reaches the castle late at night. The Countess, on his refusing to name the rider of the horse whose gallop has been heard, inflicts the awful punishment of banishment from the bedroom which he has shared with Pisana.

Carlo banished from Pisana's bedroom.

In the solitude of old Martino's closet, "at the sight of those sloping walls, of the dormer window, in the flickering light of a small lamp, the desperate craving for Pisana's pretty room so overpowered me that I beat my cheeks and brow with my fists and nails, until blood flowed freely. In the midst of my wrath I heard a light scratching at my door. 'Who's there?' said I, in a voice quivering with recent sobs. The door opened and Pisana came in, shivering with cold in her scanty chemise, and jumped on my bed." She kisses Carlo's brow, sucks the blood that trickles from it; she clings to him with a woman's

tenderness, she divines the words that will bring peace, and, with penitent confession of her wickedness, begs the boy to punish her. He refuses, and she twines a lock of her hair round Carlo's fingers, and with a sudden jerk it is torn from her head. This silky chestnut tress he ever afterwards guards as a relic.

The complex character of Pisana.

Pisana encourages, then discards and drives to despair the victims of her beauty. One poor fellow breaks his heart and dies for having believed in her pretty speeches, but Carlo, though tormented with jealousy, discovers the inborn nobility, the natural greatness, hidden from others.

"She would never find anything too difficult or repulsive, she never denied anything, provided she were sure of bringing comfort to some poor wretch. So that a deformed, lame, or maimed fellow, had he entreated, would have obtained from her one of those long passionate glances she granted to her cleverest followers."

Carlo's tragic passage from boyhood to youth.

The first moral crisis which Carlo recalls in a narrative thrilling with retrospective emotion is stirred by his first experience of sorrow—a youthful, violent grief, a lover's passionate despair, pride's first encounter with the rude reality of life, tears doubly bitter for coming so soon after the ecstasies of budding hopes, an almost wrathful impulse towards a tottering faith, all that acute gamut of agonising pain that

sooner or later marks the passage from boyhood to youth. Like many another soul in such a crisis, Carlo seeks refuge in prayer. "I mumbled the orisons of the Church, but my soul was dry as a skeleton, my heart in its dismay clung to the hope of death as to the only shelter of peace."

Counsel from dead Martino.

Like a voice from beyond the grave are some papers left for his reading by old Martino, and discovered just at this soul crisis.

"If you are miserable," Martino writes, "it means that there is sin on your soul, since peace of the soul is the bed whereon human sorrow finds rest. Search, my son, and thou wilt find some duty neglected, some wrong inflicted on your fellow creature. When the omission has been repaired, reparation made, then peace will once more reign in your heart. . . . . You will then find all the happiness that it is possible for men to enjoy." But though human reason thus speaks the language of piety, Carlo's love is not cured or his misery abated.

Carlo sent to the University of Padua.

The family at Castle Fratta, impressed with the shrewdness of Carlo, and thinking that he may help them from the complications of debt and improvidence, send him to the University of Padua to study law. His study of life there is worth more than his study of books.

Seduced by the lofty phrases of a Jesuit priest, Father Pendola, the love-sick boy tries to forget

his jealousy in thoughts of a grand and noble life. But when the priestly champion of Obscurantism tries to convince the boy that all these lofty aims can best be served by his turning spy on his comrades, then Carlo becomes distrustful. "I could not be persuaded that my worship of great ideas should lead to nothing better than the shameful duties of a spy, nor could I believe that the task, so grand in its principle, should in practice dwindle to such abject actions."

Carlo turns from Jesuit teachings.

One of his schoolmates, an apostle of the new philosophy, speaks to him of justice for all, brotherhood amongst men, and of universal equality. These ideas are none the less bright for being somewhat confused in the heads of these young people, and seemingly are better realizable. He longs for the truth at any price, for even justice for all, for the love that should bind all humanity in one solid bond, and for freedom of thought and conscience.

Naturally he has been reading Rousseau's *Le Contrat Social* and the *Profession de Foi d'un Vicaire Savoyard*—every one did so in those days; but he has read them in an Italian and patriotic spirit, with enthusiasm and entire faith, and this makes Carlo—or, rather, Nievo—different from Rousseau's other disciples.

Carlo becomes Rousseau's disciple.

"I could not remember having ever lived before that moment. Pisana seemed to have become an infinitely small being; as if from the top of a

high mountain, amidst the pure heavenly blue light, I had looked down and discerned her at the bottom of a valley. . . . . Virtue, Science, Liberty, were then the things that filled my heart, my soul lifted towards them hymns of faith and hope, whilst in a corner of my heart the memory of Pisana growled wrathfully."

In this mood Carlo, having somehow obtained his degree, returns to Castle Fratta, where he is expected to repair the dilapidated family estate; but after its pillage and destruction Carlo goes to Venice to be near Pisana.

Pisana's strange marriage. To save the family from ruin, that complex and impulsive young woman has obeyed her selfish mother and married his excellency Navagero, an invalid, peevish, old, and rich; and poor Carlo accepts her husband as he had accepted her beaux; as he accepts all her imprudences, of which the worst is Pisana's *cavaliere servente,* a French officer. But perplexing Pisana boxes the ears of her suitor on his refusing to betray his own country for her sake, and then, in order to escape from her husband's wrath and from the consequences of her imprudence, she goes to Carlo's room to ask a refuge of her former playfellow.

Pisana seeks refuge with Carlo. Pisana knocks at his door, simply and trustingly confiding in his brotherly affection to help her out of a scrape. She drops in his arms lovingly, heedless of consequences, and Carlo gives

himself to her, body and soul, without bargaining, without reflection, in such complete love that every sacrifice is as welcome as every joy. As long as the Austrian police do not knock at his door, all thoughts of his country's peril are forgotten in the rapture of this realized dream.

Carlo's life with Pisana.

This idyll is the prelude to the most eventful period of Carlo's life—jealousy, flights, quarrels, escapes follow fast. Tossed by the hazards of war, distracted by his love, he is present at all the battles, mixed up in romantic adventures. Pisana, often lost and often found, distracts him with her wantonness, rescues him from his enemies, shares his good and his evil fortune, and at last slips from his grasp. Here indeed is uncurbed romanticism, bombast, sentimentalism; yet how entirely do all these things accord with the initial plan, with the logical development of personality and the psychic evolution of these two beings.

Pisana a creature of impulse.

Impulsive Pisana is equally devoted to the worthy lover and to those mean or wicked creatures whom she despises. Thus she will leave Carlo, whom she adores, to go and nurse her husband or her mother, whom she appreciates at their truly insignificant value; or she shuts herself up in a convent with her sister Clara to mutter *paternostri*.

This explains how, in an impulse of self-denial, in a crisis of generosity, and perhaps also—so

Pisana persuades Carlo to marry.

complex is femininity—in proud longing for self-sacrifice, she persuades Carlo to marry. She attends the wedding ceremony, and then disappears.

Twenty years of domestic happiness in the quiet dulness of Portogruaro have brought Carlo—now the father of grown children—to the year 1820, and these same twenty years of quiet have brought his people to the first rebellious movements. Carlo, always eager to take arms for the principle of liberty, happens to be present at the defeat of Rieti. He is made a prisoner, and afterwards sentenced to death by the martial court of Naples. There is a reprieve. Confined in a narrow cell at Gaeta, he is exposed to the dazzling reflection of the sun on the whitewashed walls, which soon causes ophthalmia. When, six months later, by Pisana's intervention, he is released, Carlo is blind, while, to make his misery more unendurable, he is ordered to go in exile to London.

Carlo's domestic life; joins the rebellion and is imprisoned.

Pisana joins blind, exiled Carlo.

When Pisana learns that Carlo, in poverty, blindness, misery, and exile, requires her assistance, she leaves her luxurious home and hastens to him with sisterly devotion. "Pisana was for me simply a Sister of Mercy, ... forgetting the time when sweeter bonds had united us; and if I chanced to recall them, Pisana, with a joke, would shift the subject immediately." Poverty pursues the poor exiles. Vainly Pisana tries to

give lessons in French and Italian, vainly strains her eyes in making and mending lace; one by one she sells her trinkets and the best of her clothes. She is worn by hunger, cold, and the effort to conceal from Carlo her love. What would have been his torture had he known that this noble-born patrician, the reigning belle, whose husband owns millions, is daily begging bread in the London streets!

Carlo's eyesight cured, and brave, loving Pisana dies.

Lucilio finally operates on Carlo's cataract. He recovers his eyesight just in time to see death on the beloved face. More than overwork and more than starvation, Pisana's effort to conceal her passionate love for Carlo has sapped her strength while it has purified her soul. On her death-bed she begs her lover to live and to fight for the cause of Justice and Virtue. This peaceful death, coming at the close of a life filled with love, resumes Nievo's moral conception: "To die with a smile; this is not the aim but the evidence that our life has been profitable to us and to our fellow creatures."

Pisana's life has not been spent in vain. Thirty years after her death the octogenarian can still exclaim: "O blessed one! hearken to this witness I bear to thy virtue before I go down to my grave; know that if ever some spark of courage has brightened my life, I owe it only to thee. . . . . For thy sake I have been able to recant that philosophy which denies everything it can-

not understand. Thou hast taught me not to discuss, not to believe, but to hope!"

Carlo's soul attains smiling serenity.

This indefinite humanitarianism grows more consistent and definite, enticing him to noble deeds; finally at Pisana's death it rises into a mystic idealism, and attains to that smiling serenity which makes the old man exclaim: "I have found that life is a boon, provided our humility consents to our considering ourselves merely as infinitely small atoms, sharing in the universal life, and provided the pureness of our hearts teaches us to prefer the general to our own private interest. . . . . Like reapers resting at night on the sheaves they have gathered, let us hand down to our children the care of pursuing our task, whilst we rejoice to see these youthful souls making their profit of all that is disappearing, withering, and mouldering away."

Old age has its sweetness and death has no terror for the man who feels that he has indeed won peace of mind as the aftermath of experience, and can trustingly exclaim: "That same eternal Law that brings every fruit to maturity and guides the revolutions of each planet, must also provide for the survival of my hope after the term of my life and make it a glorious certainty." No blind acquiescence in dogma, and still less unbelief, has given birth to this soul serenity.

Carlo knows that "we cannot force belief."

Then "having examined his heart, he recognized that human life is a mission of justice; man is the priest of such worship, history can only register the sacrifices endured for the sake of the ever changing, everlasting welfare of mankind." Still following the highway, to smile benignantly on those who linger along the flowered byways; in this spirit the narrator lived his life, and in this spirit his novel resumed the historical moment. *He lives for the welfare of humanity.*

Nievo is hopeful because he has "accepted life as a boon, the enjoyment of which is only granted us that we may pay its price by preparing the world for those that will come hereafter."

Contrasted with this story of a human and complete love is the story of a love that has wandered into mysticism.

Clara was but a child in the Castle of Fratta and already Lucilio lived for her, already he compelled his fiery nature towards the conquest of her soul. This son of a village doctor belonged to the race of dominators. "His was one of those natures both reflective and fiery that contain in germ the best and worst passions, the leaven of a vivid imagination, and the curb of a strong and calculating will. . . . . He despised slavery to those passions which he had himself conquered. The weak must yield to the strong, the cowards surrender to the brave, the small *Love of Clara and Lucilio.*

submit to the great. Strength, greatness, courage were other words for Will. To will a thing constantly and with daring sufficed to attain one's desire."

The sweet weakness of Clara was sure to seduce this masterful soul. That he might see her and speak to her Lucilio daily visited the castle. He would entertain the Dowager, feel her pulse, dazzle her with his conversation.

"Thus Clara, whose wishes were her grandmother's, began to long for his daily visit, and the young man's appearance was welcomed by the smile of both the women. . . . . Month by month, week by week, almost day by day, and smile by smile, Lucilio watched with a loving, patient, and unfailing glance the progress of this affection which he was instilling in Clara's heart."

Lucilio wins Clara's love.

When the patiently premeditated avowal comes at last, "these words uttered in a low but quivering voice, delightfully illumined the confused desires of Clara. . . . . To hear his mouth repeat the things which she had all unconsciously been longing to hear, stirred in her, above every other emotion, a timid joy."

Love reveals at the same time Lucilio's pride and Clara's humility. "Like a passionate artist, he admired his achievement and gloated over it. . . . . Others might have throbbed with gratitude and devotion and awe; others might have thanked with tears in their eyes; with him pride

brought only a boundless, rapturous joy. A burning kiss was his answer to Clara's submission.

"You are mine!" said he, lifting the girl's hand; and these words meant: "I am worthy of you, since I have been able to win you."

Clara escapes Lucilio's grasp and becomes a nun.

Soon enough Clara escapes from his grasp, "upwards," as she says. Her soul is conquered by the only rival against whom he is powerless to struggle.

From behind a convent gate, Lucilio hears her sweet voice utter the fatal words. All her humility, all her gentleness now strive against his pride and his strength, and they are stronger. Clara tells him that her love for him, hallowed by religion, will last forever, but that she must never see him again, as she has vowed to become a nun.

Lucilio's life.

Lucilio takes bitter pleasure in bearing grandly a grand sorrow. Henceforth he devotes himself to fight the prejudices, the laws, the institutions that have opposed his happiness. His life is filled with good deeds performed without pleasure and without enthusiasm.

His death.

Lucilio, after many years, returns to Italy broken by age and sickness, and dies in Venice without the comfort of her presence even in his last moments. "He passed away holding me with his fixed glance, as if he would prevent me from pitying him. Clara was in the next room

praying for him. His last words were: 'Thank her!'" Thank her! for what? Carlo wondered at first. Afterwards he perceives that Lucilio's long ordeal may have been a boon. Instead of the flitting joys of this world, Clara had given him the eternal bliss of a world beyond the grave.

Sensual love of Prevedoni and Doretta.

There is another love story, corollary of the other two. It is a bitter story, this of Leopardo Prevedoni and his Doretta; a depressing picture of a sensual love which ends with the suicide of the man and the shame of the woman. It measures the abyss that divides inordinate frenzy from the ecstasy of true love. In her flight towards regions of pure spirituality Clara has lost touch with earth; Doretta grovels in the baseness of unfettered instinct; Pisana, and Pisana only, because she obeys all the promptings of her complex but balanced nature, has accomplished her mission.

Nievo has analyzed other passions besides love.

Nievo has successfully analyzed other passions besides love. La Rochefoucauld has not depicted with more pitiless reality the thousand disguises of ambition. Patriots of all shades, braggarts, bullies, rogues—all are comprehended, all keenly observed.

Although the evolution of Carlo Altoviti is the echo of Nievo's evolution, still there are rebellious doubts, failings, which other personages are called to represent. Lucilio echoes ambitious

and calculating Positivism. The suicidal despair of Leopardo Prevedoni has been a part of Nievo's passionate nature, else he could not have told in such heart-breaking accents this sad story.

Nievo is objective as well as subjective.

Yet this powerful subjectivism is only a part of Nievo's talent. Alternating with these numerous passages, all throbbing with his own personality, we find by hundreds descriptions, portraits, reflections that are the outcome of the most modern objectivism. Then we have an exact and impressive reproduction of reality. Nievo draws back, conceals his own personality with an intuition of the literary formula which has since been discussed, but which no one had then foreseen.

Nievo's masterly descriptive power.

Nievo can equal the best of our landscape painters, and with a poet's soul reproduce the great pantheistic soul of the world. There are pages about the sea that might have been worded by Maupassant, descriptions of the Fratta countryside which would not disparage Theuriet's best, and everywhere broadcast he has scattered with princely prodigality little sketches spontaneous and bright with exquisite colour and graceful outline.

"I discovered a place where the brook expanded into a little mere, clear as a mirror. Long meshes of water-weeds trailing at the bottom, as if caressed by a magical breeze, whilst

the little pebbles underneath gleamed bright and sheeny, like pearls dropped from caskets."

"A wild sweet briar had woven its centennial green fantastic hangings, first crowning the top of an elm tree, then yielding to the embrace of a strong-limbed oak which it enfolded on all sides, decorating and smothering it under graceful garlands. Thus from tree to tree, from branch to branch it would trip, as if in dance, offering the black berries of its juicy fruit to all the sparrows, inviting all the doves to claim their share."

The rippling streamlet, the thickets alive with the chirping of birds, the marshes that slope down to a low seashore. As in a Fragiacom's canvas are the light and shade that play about that fountain of Venchieredo, complaisant to lovers. Like some picture by an old Dutch master are those scenes in the sooty, cavernous, mysterious kitchen at Castle Fratta.

Weak dialogue a flaw in Nievo's objectivism.

Yet is there a flaw in Nievo's objectivism, a deficiency characteristic of the Italian genius of the time. His personages cannot talk. Their conversations are monotonous, colourless. Passion grows declamatory and good sense preaches heavily. These people have been speaking in a dialect which has moulded their habits of thought, the tenor of their feelings. In Nievo's effort at transposing this into pure Italian, the poignancy, the terseness of speech have stiffened, frozen, and become colourless.

Nievo's language has no accent, his style has no distinction. The pen trained by journalism to make readers understand that which the *censura* would punish if spoken plainly, can no longer reproduce primitive and familiar forms of speech.

Nievo not a humourist.

Real humour, with its undercurrents of scepticism, despondency, vanity, and egoism, is not among Nievo's chords. His ideal of greatness is too high, his love of beauty too real, his emotion too genuine, for him to joke about them. Even at the moment when he depicts some meanness of life, he admires, worships Life, and is sure that grand and beautiful things may be accomplished. If he sometimes doubts, faith soon recovers full possession; though he somewhat resembles Don Quixote, he still believes that the dream is more true than vulgar reality; though he whimpers with poor Yorick on caged birds, he rushes to set them free.

Nievo's romance is too long.

The most obvious objection to Nievo's romance is that it is too long. Events are too numerous, personages so crowded, that we have matter for a dozen ordinary novels. Few works of fiction have attained such dimensions without being divided into parts. Shakespeare's plays, that often embrace whole existences in ample historical pictures, are separated into acts. *La Divina Commedia* is repeatedly divided with subtle art. But Nievo's novel is so intemperate in style, so abounding in detail and in superfluity of material,

that it intimidates the reader and perplexes the critic; yet it is easy to understand its purpose.

Under all this prodigality of invention, amidst all this abundance of accessory adornment, Nievo never loses sight of his purpose. Sometimes he seems to wander from his plan, but it is only seeming; he knows his path and his goal.

The "Confessions" compared with other great novels.

These *Confessions* have been compared to *War and Peace* of Tolstoi, to *The Sentimental Education* of Flaubert, to *Wilhelm Meister* of Goethe, and to *Gil Blas* of Lesage. The list could easily be lengthened. All the writers who have adopted the same conception of the novel, who have endeavoured to separate the individual from the mass and converge the divers elements into one central action, must agree in the general execution of their plan.

It would be interesting to study together these great landmarks of the human mind. Across the temperament of artists that have resumed a collective soul we could discern the disparities and the similarities, and thus better comprehend some of the great problems that these superior minds have investigated from diverse points of view and in varied ways and in different climes.

Nievo, whom fame has long ignored and now condescends to praise, is not one of the world's greatest writers, yet does he possess some of all the qualities for which other great artists have been admired: some of Flaubert's penetration softened by some of Tolstoi's pity, enlarged by

some of Goethe's philosophy, and enlivened by much of Lesage's good sense. Though thoroughly Italian, Nievo's education, under Austrian obscurantism, took the form of the worship of abstract ideas, a dogmatism affected by French "*ideologues et faiseurs de programmes.*"

Nievo is both Romanticist and Realist.

The principles which have inspired the great Romanticists of northern Europe also penetrated the Italian conscience, putting forth spreading roots, sprouting pregnant buds. The wind of Romanticism blew, and this Romanticism, because it had spoken of rebellion against all fetters, because it aspired towards new horizons, and because in the beginning it set free imagination, this Romanticism seduced the Italian youth. But though Nievo owes to Classicism of the French pattern his first education, though he owes to Romanticism many of his best qualities and some of his failings, it is to the philosophers of the eighteenth century that he owes the substance of his thought.

His indebtedness to eighteenth century philosophers.

He has fed his mind on the doctrines of the *Encyclopédie;* he has assimilated as much as he could of Rousseau's genial folly, Voltaire has taught him the art of darting the winged shaft, feathered with some serious idea, and Montesquieu has enlarged his social horizon.

Especially to Diderot.

But it is from Diderot, the untiring workman, the intellectual iconoclast, that Nievo has received his most fundamental conceptions.

From him too came that blending of material-

ism and poetry. Their manner of work is the same. In both there is exhaustive preparation through observation of facts and examination of documents. In both there is deep penetration, winged imagination, enduring labour, the imperious inpulse to mix in life's strife. Their aims differ because they represent the evolution of different societies, and they are prompted by unlike motives.

Nievo and Diderot contrasted.

Nievo is a fervid patriot, because his people aspire for a country. Humanitarian Diderot might have sacrificed his country to his dream of universal brotherhood. Then Nievo is constructive, Diderot is destructive. But to both we can apply these words of Carlo Altoviti: "He who by disposition and by character will be always and in all things just towards himself, towards others, towards the whole humankind, that man will be the most innocent, the most useful, who has ever lived. His life will be a blessing to himself and to humanity; he will leave behind a deep and honourable trace in the story of his country. This example of victorious humanity will point out to all what Nature grants to her well-situated atoms."

Nievo's claims to our consideration.

It is because Nievo was one of those examples of victorious humanity, one of those "well-situated atoms" that fulfill the obligations entrusted to them, that his life and his novel deserve our consideration.

EDMONDO DE AMICIS

EDMONDO DE AMICIS

De Amicis's books charming but not satisfying.

IT fares with books as with persons: some we like without admiring, and some we perforce admire yet dislike. De Amicis and his books are eminently distinguished by that subtle charm — the Italian *simpatia* — which silences our critical sense, and awakens kindly feelings. As we see the author through his writings, we are attracted by his hopefulness, his vivacity, his simplicity; we recall the clever passages, the pleasing ensemble; yet are we conscious that something is wanting—something which only the great writer is able to impart. An examination of the work of De Amicis will reveal why we like it so well, and why, nevertheless, it does not satisfy.

The time of his birth.

In the year 1848 every Italian heart was beating with hope. Milan had broken her chains, Carlo Alberto had drawn his royal sword against the oppressor, a democratic Pope sat in Peter's chair. A buoyant confidence in the virtue of men and in the destiny of the nation flamed through the peninsula and shone on the cradle of De Amicis. It entered his infant soul; there it rooted, blossomed in boyhood, and ripened into the perennial youthfulness which is characteristic of

Oneglia, De Amicis's birthplace. the man. Oneglia, De Amicis's birthplace, boasts of no glorious past. From 1635, when Girolamo Doria sold his feudal estate to Emanuele Filiberto of Savoia, Oneglia shared the fate of Piedmont; was prize-of-war for the French Republic; and, finally, subsided into its present quietness. It is a snug little town, cosily ensconced at the foot of sheltering hills. Bright with many a gaudy flower blooming under an Italian sun, and rich in beautiful olive groves, is the little place; and her famous son is like her.

His education. De Amicis received his education at the Modena Military School; his scholarly attainments, on graduation, were those of the average military cadet. . As a soldier he shared the hardships and the glories, the victories and defeats, of the Italian campaigns. From the year 1867 to 1870 he lived in Florence, employing the leisure hours of barrack life in writing short stories for the *Italia Militare*. His *Novelle* and *Bozzetti Militari* first appeared in this review, and were received with favour. After publishing them in volumes, and seeing many editions exhausted, he resigned his commission and embarked on his literary career.

First writings were short military stories.

He naïvely tells how he hesitated, thinking "that none but very great minds have a right to renounce active life, on the presumption that they pay the debt every man owes to society, by pouring forth their thoughts in writing." He

considered, however, that even simple souls have wants and aspirations, which none but a congenial spirit can understand, and he decided to wield his pen in their service, give utterance to their unspoken feelings, and pour the balm of sympathy into their wounds.

His books are the history of his life.

From that moment, the history of his books is the history of his life. He goes abroad and gives us the journal of his travels: *Spagna, Marocco, Olanda, Londra,* and *Parigi.* On coming home, he writes *Cuore, Alle Porte d'Italia,* and *Gli Amici. Sull'Oceano,* the description of a voyage to America, reveals socialistic opinions. Observing the wretched condition of emigrants, his interest is awakened, and this leads him to study the causes of their misery. His sympathy for another class of helots urges him to investigate the lives and fortunes of schoolmasters and mistresses, and he publishes *Fra Scuola e Casa* and *Il Romanzo d'un Maestro.*

De Amicis' patriotism and socialism.

The change in his opinions was genuine. His patriotism and his socialism are but different aspects of his hopeful nature. He is eager to proclaim the era of peace and justice, eager to see wrongs redressed and sorrow turned to joy. He worships at different shrines, singing first the glory of militarism and then the blessings of peace; now the grandeur of royalty, and then the misery of the overtaxed, always with the same sincerity.

De Amicis a lucky man.

It is a current opinion among Italians that some people are born lucky and others unlucky. De Amicis was certainly a lucky man; he knew his powers and his limitations, and wisely confined himself to the only subject about which he knew anything—soldier life. To compensate for his lack of classical education and of literary style he read extensively, studied Fanfani's *Vocabulario,* and strove to imitate the idiomatic, flowing Tuscan, knowing that to overcome his harsh native dialect, it is needful for a Lombard "to wash his clothes in Arno's waters."

Enthusiastic reception of his first works.

His first literary productions—*Novelle,* and *Bozzetti Militari*—were everywhere hailed with delight. Patriotic enthusiasm still vibrated in the Italian heart, and he struck an accordant note. Diplomacy had done more to bring about the happy result—Italian independence—than military valour; still, now that Italy was free and united under its accepted King, stories of the army, its sufferings and struggles, were pleasant reading.

His psychological inaccuracy.

Doubtless De Amicis's soft-hearted officers and thick-brained soldiers are indifferently accurate portraitures of the outer man, but the vision of their inner motives is obscure. This psychological inaccuracy was common to contemporary literature. In examining the artistic production of those years we are impressed by the absence of any suggestive intention.

These Italian artists are skilled workmen; they have sense of the harmony of colours and of the purity of lines; their brushes and chisels accurately render the effects they conceive; we are pleased, but we are not made to think. The beautiful work of art has not been deeply meditated. In De Amicis's literary performance we find the same superficiality and the same skill. His effeminate officers weep or utter sentimental bathos on the slightest provocation.

And superficial beauty.

When Kipling's Mulvaney and his comrades sit round a fire and discuss their own or their officers' affairs, we get such insight into these rough, prejudiced, upright hearts, that we read their motives and interpret their actions; but when De Amicis, in the *Figlio del Reggimento,* shows us a whole staff fondling a little street urchin, stroking his unkempt hair, and pouring over him long speeches of motherly tenderness, we are amused but not convinced.

De Amicis's psychology contrasted with Kipling's.

Carmela, the prettiest tale in the volume *Vita Militare,* is the melancholy story of a love-lorn peasant girl, insane through a sad love affair with an officer. She lives on a dreary islet, peopled only by convicts and a few soldiers. This country Ophelia mistakes for her false lover every officer who, like him, is sent to command the little garrison. How a young lieutenant is first moved to pity; how he falls in love with her, and how he contrives to cure her insanity by

"Carmela," a melancholy tale.

enacting again the scene of her first lover's departure, is cleverly told.

However interesting this heterodox experiment, these extravagant emotions, these sorrows and these joys, they are outside our moral experience, they are but the shadowy creations of the author's imagination. The scenery, the landscape, the figures, we clearly discern, but we fail to recognize the souls.

De Amicis's content his limitation.

De Amicis is blessed with a healthy, cheerful content, which effectively limits his power. He does not

> "Look before and after,
> And pine for what is not."

Poets have been great only when they have agonized to realize their ideals. Painters and sculptors have created masterpieces only when they have blended in harmony the outer and the inner vision. This power of creating an ideal, joined with a craving to describe it in words, lines, colours, or musical sounds, will either make a great writer out of Bunyan, the "Bedford Tinker," or it will frame a great musician out of the deaf Beethoven. No Italian poet has been greater than Dante, because none has suffered so acutely as did he from the contrast between the beauteous dream and miserable reality.

He has not suffered as great poets must.

De Amicis, kind and generous in his private life, his writings instinct with sympathy for all who suffer, and filled with hopefulness, is in an

enviable and comfortable mood; but it is not the best mood for the production of poetry or even of great prose fiction.

Not stirred by grand motives.

The grand motives which stir human souls never overmaster De Amicis. Unlike Manzoni or Fogazzaro, he is not haunted by the "Vision" wherein submission to God's law and eternal justice is the secret of the high, holy, and perfect life. Neither is patriotism a passionate feeling with him. He does not sing, like Berchet, nor declaim with Guerrazzi, nor stir the souls of men with a poetic alarum-call like Niccolini's *Arnoldo da Brescia,* or Mazzini's *Dio e Popolo.*

But teaches practical lessons.

De Amicis came at a time when the long-cherished dream of Italian independence had been realized, and when, as with many other realized dreams, it had lost much of its halo. Italy, at last delivered from foreign rule, now needs a different kind of heroism; the task of the present generation is to educate this renovated nation, and make this newly united people better and happier. In this patriotic duty De Amicis has not failed; every line written by him carries its practical and useful lesson.

Has no dramatic power.

De Amicis attempts no soaring flight, but is content to warble pretty sonnets and indite clever epistles. His military characters are, like their author, satisfied with themselves and the world. The dramatic struggle in every human breast, between conscience and necessity, between altruism and egoism, is ignored by them.

Italian militarism. Militarism twenty years ago was not freely discussed, yet even in those palmy days, officers and troopers must sometimes have protested against the hardships and misery of their rough life. Has De Amicis never heard of officers committing suicide rather than obey commands which they knew to be cruel and degrading? Such facts ought to have opened before his eyes a long vista of dramatic possibilities, of struggles, of torturing doubts hidden in many a brave heart, throbbing under the double-breasted "spencer."

De Amicis's "Cammilla." In *Cammilla* he shows us a young fellow resorting to mutilation that he may be exempted from military service. The poor wretch is painted in darkest colours; no extenuating circumstance is suggested. Yet this voluntary martyr is worthier of contempt, pitying contempt, than of indignation. Dostoievsky will awaken compassion for the agonies of a vulgar murderer on the gallows; De Amicis will not tolerate pity for a man who is guilty only of cowardice, and who has injured none but himself.

Best books are his travels. The purely descriptive works—the travels—are the best products of De Amicis's literary industry. Here his special talents have a free range and his limitations are not offensively obvious. He looks about him with the perception peculiar to all Italian artists, and he renders the impressions received in a charming

style. He writes as some genial men will chat over their wine—in a circle of old friends. He reminds one of those good-natured fellows you often meet in Italy, who talk for the sake of talking, laugh at their own jokes, smile at their own innuendoes, and altogether amuse themselves so heartily that they amuse their listeners.

De Amicis never makes haste through any subject; he strolls leisurely in by-paths, lingers in shady nooks, gathers wild flowers, describes not only the things he sees, but also what they suggest. Before entering a town, he tells us what tapestry pictures his anticipatory fancy has been weaving; then he gives us his first impression, and, lastly, a minute picture of everything.

Description of Broek in "Olanda."

Open the volume *Olanda* and read his description of Broek. Ever since entering Holland he has been puzzling his mind about that famous village. When at last he comes to Broek, he peers through the trees with playful impatience, mutters to himself, laughs aloud, like the overgrown schoolboy that he is; and somehow we feel flattered by these familiar confidences, we grow fond of so unconventional a companion, and willingly follow his lead.

We wander with him in Spain, assist at a *corrida de toros,* and miss none of the exciting episodes. We follow him to Morocco, behold such brilliant and gorgeous *fantasias* that we think De Amicis is at his best when painting gay pa-

geants and festivals. But when we turn to sober descriptions of toy-like Dutch houses, and the picture of a dark-grey sky, lowering on the dull somber waves of a bleak northern coast, we stop and wonder which we like best. No other books of travel can afford such pleasure.

The dogs of Constantinople.

The reader of *Costantinopoli* will remember the clever sketch of those dogs "that will hardly move even when they see a four-in-hand coming down upon them at full speed. They will only rise at the very last moment, when the horses' hoofs are close to their heads, and then they only drag their laziness a few inches farther away, just the strictly necessary distance to escape injury." The picture is so well drawn that it would be ungracious to suggest that in the narrow Constantinople streets, no dogs ever saw a four-in-hand coming down on them at full speed.

"There they will crouch in the middle of the street in a circle, or in a row of six, ten, or twenty, so doubled up that they look more like a heap of filth than like living animals; and there they will sleep the whole day, amidst people going to and fro, in a deafening turmoil. Neither rain nor snow, nor scorching sun nor biting cold, can move them. When the snow falls it falls on them, when it rains they lie sunk in the mud up to their muzzles, so that when they rise

at last they look like dogs moulded in clay, with eyes, ears, and faces hardly distinguishable."

This last bit is graphic, and such pretty things are scattered through these "travels." Monotony is avoided! His snowy landscapes, his cosy Dutch cottages and rows of ships lying at anchor in quiet Flemish towns, never tire us by sameness of description.

De Amicis a charming travelling companion.

De Amicis is an admirable travelling companion and *table d'hôte* neighbour. His winsome manner and good humour are sure to call forth a responsive word or smile from chance acquaintances. When he rides on top of a London omnibus he discovers that it is not needful for two persons to speak the same language in order to enjoy a pleasant chat. A young man sitting at his elbow says something to him in English. De Amicis nods and smiles so appropriately that even "my denials must have fitly answered to some question he was putting, and thus encouraged he went on with full assurance of being understood. Considering that he seemed to like speaking with me, I made a show of understanding and treated him to a series of nods, smiles, and unprecise gestures that might answer to anything he would be saying. When I had tired of my *rôle,* I began to speak in Italian. It was like groping in the dark; yet he laughed, clapped his hands on my knee, and sat listening as if I had been singing an *arietta;* then again he fell to

talking in English, and thus we went on until the 'bus stopped."

Happy the traveller who can meet with such adventures, and, wherever he is, like a magnet attract to himself all the near-by floating atoms of good will!

"Cuore" is his most popular book.

Cuore is the most popular of De Amicis's writings; for a time it was the most popular work of Italian prose. It purposes to promote comradeship among the young, without regard to social distinctions. It brings before us a schoolboy world—Italian schoolboys—portrayed to the life. Consider how difficult it is for grown people to understand children's minds, remember the nonsense daily published in the vain attempt to recall the emotions and language of childhood, and then we shall appreciate De Amicis's successful performance.

De Amicis's appeal to boys.

When De Amicis writes his heart glows with youthful fire, he understands boys because he is a boy himself. His ideas are tinged with that mixture of artlessness and shrewdness which characterizes our modern boy's temper. Fiery patriotism still blazes in boyish hearts; and many a gallant hero of eleven has rapturously admired the brave little drummer or the daring Lombard boy whose stories are here told with exemplary simplicity. The young reader is never oppressed by dull preaching, though his attention is fixed on suggestive examples of moral good-

ness and civic and military virtue. Some world-wise sceptic may smile at those heroic feats, but the author believed in them when he wrote them, and his conviction warms his reader into unquestioning belief.

His book on friendship—"Gli Amici."

De Amicis loves to recall his friendships. Just jotting down his recollections as they came, he has accumulated material for two bulky volumes —*Gli Amici.* Here is none of Montaigne's penetrating analysis of friendship; for the mystery of the human soul is denied him.

So, too, when he followed the footsteps of his master, Manzoni, and wrote a story of sentiment, it was a failure. Zola truly tells the tale of a sensitive child who dies of a broken heart, after her mother's sin. De Amicis, in the *Dramma nella Scuola,* also tells the story of a schoolgirl who, shocked by the revelation of her mother's shameful life, falls ill and dies. Zola, in a few masterful strokes, so reveals little Pauline's feelings that we understand her slightest word, her very look, (as when she recoils under the doctor's physical examination,) but we fail to penetrate into the heart of De Amicis's heroine. Useless characters cumber the scene, the principal figure is hazy—without individuality. The ideas crossing the dying child's mind are detailed, but we do not behold the internal struggle, we do not feel a human heart.

De Amicis and Zola compared.

The novel *Il Romanzo di un Maestro* is merely

"Il Romanzo di un Maestro."

a number of confused scenes in a schoolmaster's life. Even hopeful De Amicis is oppressed by the gloom of the subject. But it is not for such a buoyant spirit to live in dejection. Like Doctor Faustus, De Amicis will crave to be shown the good and the evil, the real and the fantastical universe; but then, like him, he will only find satisfaction in a beauteous dream, a vision of peace and justice. The growing success of his *Travels* indicated to De Amicis his greatest power, and he wisely renounced sentimentalism and confined himself to description.

"Sull'-Oceano" his strongest book.

Sull'Oceano is his most accomplished performance. He dispenses with rickety historical props, cheap geographical lore, and paints the ever changing scene. The volume is an album of photographs of an emigrant ship. The first-class passengers are described in a mildly satiric vein, the miserable emigrants with loving sympathy. Humorous passages are happily intermingled with deeply affecting scenes, and so light is the author's touch, so exquisite his sensibility, that there are no jarring notes.

As he sits listening to a wretched emigrant's account of his woes his interest is roused to the consideration of social problems. And from the contemplation of one class of sufferers he passes to a study of fundamental economic questions.

This voyage to America on board the *Galileo* was the turning-point in De Amicis's life. The

man who steps on board light-hearted and inquisitive, so long as he regards the staterooms and their occupants, is still the benevolent amateur who has toured through Europe; but after he has visited the steerage, and has seen the misery of fifteen hundred emigrants penned together in a space scarcely sufficient for one hundred human beings; after he has witnessed what this mass of wretched and unwashed humanity endures through seasickness, confinement, and the agony of uncertainty, his heart is profoundly touched, and he becomes a different man.

Is written with earnestness and conviction.

No dallying here in nicely worded descriptions, no amused witticism; his pen flies now right to its aim, and he pours out his emotion: the saddening sight, the saddening words ringing in his ears, the intolerable hardships that have driven his countrymen to desert their beloved native land. He speaks from the heart, without a thought of style or effect, as a man to whom nothing is alien that touches humanity. He learns from these emigrants how the Mantuan peasants live on boiled roots all the winter; how, in Lombardy, labourers in the rice-fields toil daily, up to the waist in water, under a scorching sun, shivering with ague, on starvation wages; how, in Calabria the people feed, like beasts, on sprouts of trees; how in Basilicata, the peasant shares his hovel with his pig, yet never tastes a morsel of its flesh.

Misery of Italian peasants.

He listens, and is persuaded that neither indolence nor vice causes this suffering; that these poor creatures have struggled hard and bravely, spending the sweat of their brows and the strength of their bodies upon a land which could not yield them even scant daily bread; and he finds words that awaken pity in his readers. There is the aged and sickly peasant who quests his only son; his clue a tattered bit of paper bearing a problematic address; and who dies with that cry: "Shall I never see my boy again!" There is the labourer from Mestre who, when they said that in America "we'll be starved to death," replied: "Why, we were starving already; it can't be worse over there!" Yet when a newborn babe increases his famished brood, he rejoices over it and swears to toil the harder.

Vivid pictures powerfully painted.

All these are vivid pictures, powerfully painted, with genuine but sober emotion. The writer is labouring under the effects of an intellectual crisis, and whilst he is coming under the dominion of new ideas and new sympathies, the things which once interested him deeply interest him no longer.

"La Carrozza di Tutti" presents Turinese street scenes.

But De Amicis recovers his balance, and now his mind, enlarged by pity, sympathizes with all his fellow creatures, in every class of society; as we can see from his latest book, *La Carrozza di Tutti*—scenes of life in Turin as they present themselves to a passenger on the tram-cars. Rich

and poor people, the high-spirited youth and the crippled invalid, the fashionable young lady, the venerable old dame and the outcast harlot—all file before our eyes in chance medley. Not a picture, but a kaleidoscopic view; not a book, but a series of notes. This want of unity is indeed a fault common to all the De Amicis literary work. In a work of art we expect to have a revelation of the artist. Literary photography is not a fine art; we want a painter to create a higher form of life, a grander reality, by an effort of his genius.

De Amicis's work lacks unity.

Here then is the answer to the question propounded at the beginning of this study; here lies the reason of our incomplete satisfaction with the books of De Amicis. His mind and his sense organs are responsive to external stimuli; his heart responds to generous impulse! Like a well-tuned instrument, he vibrates harmoniously, he gives voice to the unspoken sentiments afloat around him; he reproduces and embellishes; but he cannot create. Neither in literature nor in politics will De Amicis ever be a leader. His voice is often raised in eloquent harangues, and his active pen is often busy teaching the working classes useful lessons, and new editions of his books are always in demand. Yet with the high esteem, the warm affection he has earned, we doubt whether he has influenced either literary or political Italy.

De Amicis is sympathetic, but not creative.

ANTONIO FOGARAZZO

ANTONIO FOGAZZARO

THE father of Antonio Fogazzaro, a nobleman of Vicenza, endowed his son with love for learning; his mother cultivated his musical taste; Abbé Giacomo Zanella taught him the classics; and when he entered the University of Turin he studied law to please his father, and attended lectures on mathematics and natural science to please himself.

Fogazzaro's parental inheritance and education.

Having sent the manuscript of *Miranda,* a romance in verse, to his father, his encouragement determined his future career. The white-haired poet, *senatore per merito,* honoured by all Italy, never experienced a sweeter triumph than this first paternal approval.

"Miranda," a romance in verse.

This novel has the qualities and the deficiencies natural to a first performance, but it is genuine poetry. Signora Maria, Miranda's mother, and her old friend, the Doctor, propose a marriage between Miranda and Enrico, the Doctor's nephew. The girl is overjoyed, but the young poet loftily tells his fiancée that he can neither obey his uncle's wish nor follow the impulse of his own heart. No entangling alliance shall fetter his inspiration or bar the path to glory!

Miranda is submission personified; she neither struggles against her love nor after her lover.

Miranda, the heroine, a typical Italian woman.

Aurora Leigh, in a somewhat similar situation, rises higher than grief and lives for humanity; Miranda only submits. She is the Italian Catholic woman; devoted, unselfish, and not free from fatalism. Renunciation is the keynote of her personality. She plays old-fashioned ballads for the Doctor. "He is an old man and cannot make a hurried exit from the stage of life"; he lingers over a last farewell, sighs at the thought of what might have been had she become his foster daughter and stood at his death-bed with Enrico.

The young man, disillusioned and remorseful, lingers in the neighbourhood after his uncle's death. The old love revives. As Miranda listens to the unexpected avowal, she starts from her invalid's chair; then, with a cry, falls back—dead.

"Malombra," his first prose novel.

In his first prose novel, *Malombra,* Fogazzaro lavishes poetic imagination to excess. The Castle of Malombra looms grand and dismal, skirted by a lake. There Count Ormengo lives in mutual hatred with his niece, Marina. By chance this romantic young lady finds some of her grandmother's writings hidden in this castle, where she had been imprisoned by an injured husband. Deluded by the vagueness of these fragments, Marina imagines that she is announced as the reincarnation of the dead sinner,

her uncle Ormengo represents the jailer husband, and a visitor, Corrado Silla, the lover. Striving to evoke the past and achieve a posthumous vengeance, Marina ruins herself, Silla, and her uncle. Editta, an idealized type of maidenly purity, tries to save Silla from this baleful influence, but the young man, blinded by love, shares Marina's delusion. Too late he awakens and strives to prevent the catastrophe; the insane girl kills him with a pistol, frightens her uncle to death, steps into a boat, and disappears in the gloomy lake!

A French critic pronounces this canvas but a vulgar newspaper *feuilleton*. Yet what a wealth of interesting ornament is introduced. Fogazzaro gives us a page in Silla's diary explaining his theory about literature. He gives us his immature opinion on spiritism. Count Ormengo expounds Fogazzaro's political creed, whilst Steinnege, the German secretary, sets forth sundry scraps of information on all possible subjects.

"Malombra" echoes crisis in Fogazzaro's character.

Malombra echoes the crisis Fogazzaro was then experiencing. The philosophical teachings at the University, and the growing influence of infidelity, shook his first boyish faith and unhinged his moral balance; but his tendencies and his training prompted him to accept the most religious interpretation of life's problems.

Malombra marks this crisis. Silla's igno-

Voices religious doubt.

rance of any high controlling motive, Marina's search for revenge, are varied shapes of torturing doubt in a soul once blessed with entire faith and submission. The last chapter is a pæan of thanksgiving for recovered belief. All the sinful or selfish personages, damned to tragical ends, make way for Editta the pious and her regenerated father. In the darkening village church, the evening *ave Maria* chimes a last appeal. Steinnege kneels, conquered by his daughter's faith, and repeats after her the words that mean pardon and love for all his foes and communion in her creed. The scene, soberly delineated, is impressive.

"Daniele Cortis" presents struggle against sinful love.

If religious doubt had lingered in Fogazzaro's mind, he could never have conceived *Daniele Cortis*. The plot is the story of two hearts struggling against sinful love.

Elena di San Giuliano is married to a villain who provides her with all the extenuating circumstances that justify a wife, tempted to break her marriage vows. Daniele's love for his cousin is of so pure an essence, that he hides his own wound, and bids her give up present happiness and future peace to follow her degraded husband in exile, though he neither loves nor appreciates her.

In many novels—English novels—heroines, reaching the verge of sin, like Elena, are rescued

by social considerations or by tenderness for a little child or an aged parent; by womanly pride or by the sudden reawakening of youthful purity. But Elena is free from such restraint: no one is shocked at her behaviour. She lives in an unprincipled society, is familiar with the petty scandals buzzing around her, and "has no prejudices." Yet she intuitively perceives the abyss between right and wrong and resists temptation.

Italian readers are inclined rather to appreciate artistic performance than metaphysical investigation; they are better qualified to admire beauty of form than soundness of doctrine; yet *Daniele Cortis,* though clumsy in composition, compelled the admiration of critics, and soon became that exception in Italian literature—a pecuniary success.

Fogazzaro's lofty ideals.

With lofty ideal Fogazzaro shames the grossness of our habitual judgment, lifts us to his own altitude, and compels recognition of that divine law so difficult to comprehend, so impossible to ignore. Our individualism protests against the fetters of social or religious convention, against dogmatic assumptions of exclusive revelation of the law of the soul. We prate of the right of private judgment and our superiority to the prejudices of the bigotted and benighted. Yet when some lofty ideal of the inner life is presented in its adamantine purity we acknowledge it as an

integrant element of our soul, the measure of our worth or unworth.

Appeal to our noblest selves.

We may protest against this mutual renunciation; we may find no beauty in Elena's faithfulness to a husband so unworthy; and yet some scarcely suspected chord in our heart thrills, vibrating in unison when this predominant note is struck. We love these lovers because they reveal to us our noblest selves. It is as our unfolding spirit comprehends its craving for perfection, its evolution towards the highest interpretation of life, that we shall attain to the hope of mankind. Even now it shines, the only true standard by which deeds and ideas can be appraised.

"Little Old-Fashioned World" his greatest novel.

Malombra is the cry of a mind tormented by doubt; *Daniele Cortis* is the exultancy of a soul resting in recovered faith; *A Little Old-Fashioned World* witnesses Fogazzaro's further progress—his faculty for observing and rendering with sympathy different characters and disparate psychic phenomena.

As in his other novels, a moral problem is here stated and discussed, and a solution is indicated. Other opinions, other views are implied, the complexity of the psychic question recognized. With wide vision he presents the several aspects of each situation, the several answers suggested by every moral query which he propounds.

His text is the supremacy of religious faith

over philosophic dogma as guide through the difficulties of life, as comforter of the human heart in the hour of sorrow. Franco and Luisa are the embodiments of the two different ideals, the religious and the self-sufficient; the drama enacted in their souls is the unending struggle of many a noble mind agonizing in doubt as to which is the true ideal. This psychological study has as its setting the author's birthplace, Valsolda, and its society in the period which witnessed the budding and blossoming of the national idea. *Teaches supremacy of Faith.*

The political storm of 1848 is over, and the *Little Old-Fashioned World,* as well as the troubled lake, appears at peace. The wind, *la breva,* may soon agitate the quiet waters, and the ear can hear the muttering of a tempest brooding in the hearts of patriots, but Marchesa Orsola Maironi presides over her dinner-party, unconscious of approaching changes.

There she sits in her high-backed armchair, inhaling a pinch of snuff, petting her dog. She is a short figure with a sallow, expressionless face, ornamented by a black wig. She measures the warmth of her welcome and the kindliness of her speeches by the rules and punctilios of the time and place. She is the star of first magnitude, around whom the smaller planets of the official world revolve; all her guests are devoted to the Austrians, or at least reconciled to the actual condition of things. She favours the Gov- *Marchesa Maironi and her grandson Franco.*

ernment because it represents power; she, too, is an autocrat.

Don Franco Maironi, the Marchesa's grandson and heir, enters the dining-room, heralding a storm. His grandmother praises an Austrian functionary, and Franco breaks his plate, and, muttering protestations, leaves the room.

The quarrel. After the departure of the bewildered guests and after the recital of the evening rosary, we have a first encounter between the grandmother and Franco. The old autocrat lectures him upon his duty towards her, and hints at the consequences of following his inclination for a certain person she does not condescend to mention. They part for the night with angry words and bitter feelings. On hearing that Franco has left the house at this late hour the Marchesa little thinks that her grandson is hurrying to the house of the girl he loves, and that in a few hours their secret marriage will have been celebrated in the church of Castello.

Impulsive Franco is a dreamer. Despite his violence, Franco is rather a dreamer than a man of action. An artist without technical skill; a poet content with feeble imitations of Giusti and of Foscolo; music he feels as the cry of his soul, the language for unspoken love and hope, yet his performance lacks technique; a lawyer, idle because of indolence and dislike of the Austrians.

Even his religious principles are the result rather of a kind heart and mystic tendency, than the fruit of meditation. His faith has come to him by inheritance, and he accepts it without reflection. Franco, with all his piety, is guided by his impulsive heart, his loyal nature, his contempt for cowardice and deceit.

Luckily for this day-dreamer there are kind souls ready to save him from immediate distress. One of these providences is the *ingegnere* Pietro Ribeira, the bride's uncle, whom we are presently shown painfully climbing in the dark the steep pathway to Castello, where his invalid sister, Teresa Rigey, and her daughter Luisa are living.

Ribeira a beautiful character.

And now they reach the Rigey's humble dwelling. "No sooner had Zio Pietro knocked rather noisily at the door than a light step was heard hurrying along the passage, and a melodious voice exclaimed: 'What a noise you make, Uncle!' 'Did you want me to knock with my nose?' was the *ingegnere's* pleasant reply. His niece stopped his mouth with one hand and drew him aside with the other; puts both her arms round her uncle's neck, and lays her face upon his heart. '*Ciao, neh!* That will do,' said the *ingegnere,* stiffening against this caress, because he felt in it a gratefulness he could not have tolerated in words. 'That will do! How's your mother?'

The Rigey household.

"Luisa only clung closer to him. Her uncle

had been a father to her, the support of the little household, though in his warm-hearted simplicity he never dreamed of any claim to his sister's and his niece's gratitude.

"'Your mother?' he reiterated.

"'She was all right this evening, and in high spirits; but now she is fretting because Franco has come and says that he has quarrelled with his grandmother.'

"'Oh, poor me!' sighed the *ingegnere,* who would thus commiserate himself when he heard of some blunder committed by anyone else.

"'No, Uncle; Franco is quite right.' Luisa pronounced these words with vivacity. 'Yes,' she insisted, after her uncle had muttered a doubtful 'hem!' 'he is a hundred times right! But,' she added, in a whisper, 'he says that his sudden departure from home will lead his grandmother to discover everything.'

"'Better so!' exclaims the kind man, who has already made a plan for providing the imprudent pair with a home."

When the marriage service is over and a bottle of wine has been drunk to celebrate the event, Franco, unwilling to go home, spends his wedding-night at the house of his former tutor.

Blustering, old-fashioned Professor Gilardoni.

Professor Gilardoni, a dear old-fashioned character, fussy and blustering, but devoted to Franco, has a great secret to impart. Among some old papers left by his father—an agent in

the Maironi family—Gilardoni has discovered the lost will. By this document Franco's grandfather, after abusing his wife and suggesting doubts as to the legitimacy of his son, bequeathes his fortune to his grandson Franco, cutting off Marchesa Orsola with a pittance. *The lost will.*

With characteristic inconsistency, Franco does not destroy the will, though resolved to make no use of a paper which would bring shame and poverty to his grandmother. He is satisfied with his secret triumph over her, knowing that all the wealth and power she rejoices in, and with which she crushes him, are his gift.

Before the end of this eventful night, Signora Teresa Rigey has quietly slipped from feverish sleep into a deeper rest. Franco, hurrying up to his wife's house, finds her adorning the deathbed with flowers.

"Luisa insisted on delaying the burial; she wanted to be with her mother as long as possible. . . . . In her opinion her mother was all there on that couch she had strewn with many a blossom. She never thought that any part of her might be living elsewhere, have risen up to the twinkling stars. She only felt that the dear parent who had lived so many years wholly for her would, in a few hours, be laid under the leafy walnut trees of the churchyard, whilst she would be still enjoying the sun and life and love." *Luisa, the agnostic.*

Yet, knowing that both Franco and the dear

departed one would wish her to pray, she kneels and dutifully mutters a *paternoster* and *requiem,* but she soon rises, finding no comfort in prayer. Surely God was too great and high to care for human worship, and if she erred, a good God would not punish her for failing to interpret a mystery to which he had provided no clue.

Estrangement from the Marchesa.

Franco's grandmother, instead of welcoming Luisa as his wife, has his letter returned unanswered. With the greatest simplicity, as if it were the most natural thing, Zio Pietro offers his own house, only regretting that they will have to put up with a small allowance and live in the country; "as for me, I must thank your grandmother for providing me with a family."

"Ombretta Pipi," the baby.

Luisa's careful housekeeping and Franco's artistic tastes bring life and comfort to Zio Pietro's quaint old country house on the shore of the Lugano lake. A baby adds new joy. When on holidays Zio Pietro comes from his dull office in town, his kind heart rejoices in the happiness he has made for others, and which he shares when little Maria climbs on his knee and calls for the old songs and tales. From her favourite doggerel about a "light shadow flitting over the Mississippi" little Maria receives her pretty nickname of "Ombretta Pipi."

Thus life slips smoothly away for Franco in the long leisure which enables him to cultivate

his artistic tastes; and for untiring Luisa, sewing, nursing her babe, cajoling her uncle with constant care, sharing Franco's vague patriotic aspirations, and attracting into her home circle all the personages of this little world who dare risk the Marchesa's displeasure.

Secret bitterness between Franco and Luisa.

And yet, there is a secret spring of bitterness which will soon enough poison the whole current of life.

A conversation between Luisa and Professor Gilardoni propounds the fateful problem.

"'There are souls,' said the professor, 'who, denying a future life, openly behave in accordance with this opinion, merely enjoying the present. These are but a small number. There are others who, pretending to believe in another life, yet in all their sayings and doings seem to care only for this one. These make up a large number. Then there are others who, giving little heed to any future existence, yet so manage to live as not to spoil their chances of enjoying it if it turned out to be true. These make up a still greater number. Then there are souls who really trust in a future life, yet divide all their thoughts and actions into two distinct and opposing categories: one for earthly, the other for heavenly purposes. And these make up the greatest number. Only a very few live their present life entirely for that future existence which they profess to believe.'"

Luisa, with a glance at her uncle, who is trotting little Ombretta on his knee, adds: "'There are also souls who do not believe in any future state, yet always act on earth as if nothing were of account but this future reward.'"

Not even to this tried friend will Luisa hint her sentiment about Franco's inconsistent piety, but she freely discusses her own opinions.

Luisa's declaration of faith.

Yes, she believes in God; but why take for granted the immortality of the soul, which may after all be nothing but man's invention, eager to secure for himself a reward for good achieved, and to provide a chastisement for wrong committed? Would it not be nobler, because more true, to accept death for ourselves as it is for every other living being, a simple fact unattended by any consequence, something like the shining of stars or the blossoming of flowers?

Franco's incapacity for active life.

Whilst Luisa, the devoted wife, has misgivings as to her husband's capacity for active life, Franco, the no less loving husband, is conscious of the lack of soul communion between himself and Luisa.

As he runs his fingers over the piano keys he thinks of those golden dreams vanished for lack of his wife's encouragement. Loneliness oppresses him; but Luisa, coming on tiptoe, lays her hands over his heart, and when they have exchanged a lovers' kiss, a few tender words, Franco, inspired, pours out in an improvisation

the joy of his soul, the love that the mystic language of music reveals to the fond heart listening intent.

Different moral standpoints divide these souls.

Yet mutual love alone cannot fill the abyss dividing these souls whose moral standpoints, whose interpretation of the elementary principles of life, are so divergent. Indeed, the very constancy of their love increases the suffering. This hunger for sympathy becomes torture, when each realizes the other's insufficiency. Luisa, brave, loving, self-denying, self-reliant, feels Franco's inability to guide and protect her through life and to provide for his child. He neither works to support his wife and child nor helps the cause of Italian independence. Franco's heart reproaches Luisa for not blindly trusting in an Almighty Power, in an Absolute Justice, that will redress all wrongs.

Religious differences.

This is the more distressing, as ultimately this antagonism influences the education of little Maria. Franco's ideal is timid reverence for the infinite God he adores, an ecstasy of prayer, contemplation of the joys of paradise, the solemnity of Church ritual. Luisa would like her to be brave, active, unprejudiced, eager for the just and right. When Franco says:

"'Maria, you ought not to do that, because God sees you and is displeased,' Luisa would rather say: 'Maria, you shall not do that, because it is wrong.'"

Poverty's trials bring separation.

External causes, too, add their bitterness. Marchesa Orsola, in her hatred for Franco and his friends, secures the dismissal of Pietro Ribeira from his office, and hard times begin. Luisa meets poverty with added energy and self-denial; she achieves prodigies of needlework, and has a cheering smile for her uncle, a pretty story for Ombretta, and a tender word for Franco.

Franco is at his worst in this trial. He frets and fumes and hesitates, under the annoyances of a poverty which he does nothing to lighten. At last he resolves to seek work in Turin, and hopes to participate in the approaching war.

Before leaving he tells Luisâ of his grandfather's will. She cares little for money, but she wants justice done and the wishes of the dead executed. "Let all this wealth go to a hospital, but let the will be proved." Franco has scruples; and will not have his grandmother shamed. To end Luisa's opposition, he says that Gilardoni has destroyed the document. The blundering *professore* tries to frighten the Marchesa into doing justice. But, without showing the least sign of fear, Marchesa Orsola has the local police order him to go home or be sent to prison.

Franco is bitterly surprised on hearing of Gilardoni's visit to the Marchesa, and believes that Luisa has instigated this proceeding. The

ensuing explanation is characteristic of Fogazzaro's manner:

Franco's and Luisa's painful explanation.

"'How can I believe what you say!' exclaimed Franco.

"She started back with an agonized cry, then came forward one step and held out her arms.

"'No,' entreated she piteously, 'tell me that you believe me, that you trust me. Tell me so immediately, else . . . . you cannot know!'. . . .

"'What? What can I not know?'

"'You do not know me. I may after this love you, but never, never more be a wife to you. Do you understand me . . . . never, never more!'

"He drew her closer to him, he grasped her hands tight enough to hurt them, and whispered:

"'Yes, I will. I will some day.'

"'Say you do now.'

"In fact, he did believe her even now, but where there is anger there is pride, and he would not immediately relent. His accent was condescending, not convincing. They stood silently clasping each other's hands, then slowly relaxed their grasp. Luisa was the first to set herself free. Having once given expression to her long pent-up feelings, Luisa empties her soul in her desire of being absolutely loyal.

"'Did you ever love me?' queries Franco.

"'Oh, so much!'

"His spirit rose elated, and an accent of

sincerity rang in his voice as he added: 'Why, then, did you not give me all your soul?'

"This was a momentous question. Was it indeed her duty to answer it? By so doing she must reveal thoughts that had been hidden in the deepest recess of her heart, and widen the abyss that divided her from Franco! She kept silent so long that Franco said: 'Why don't you go on?' She summoned all her strength and spoke.

"'Yes, my soul has never been wholly with you; I have always felt alien and estranged from you in the feeling that should overrule all others.'"

Luisa's religious ideal rejects prayer.

She tries to show how she has tried, and failed, to accept her mother's and his conception of a Supreme Being she can neither see nor understand. Dissecting her own heart, she explains how her mother's example had been more effective in reconciling her to a religious ideal than Franco's, because his actions are not consistent with his professions.

"'You are as warm-hearted, as generous, as noble-minded as I could wish you to be, but your faith and your religious habits make void all your qualities. Your high ideal is lulled by faith and prayer. You cannot act. You are satisfied with loving me, your child, and Italy. You well know what I expected from you in many instances. You have warm patriotic feelings. Well,

I would have you serve your country actively, as best you could.'"

She concludes with her religious credo: "'God is, and He is as powerful and wise as you say; but He cares nothing for our addressing Him or worshipping Him. That which He expects from us we can guess by that which He has put in our conscience, by the place and rank He has assigned to each. He wants us to love all that is good and hate all that is evil; and He wants us to use all our efforts in accordance with this love and this hatred; only concerning ourselves with those things which, being of this world, we can understand and feel.'" *Luisa's religious credo.*

Franco's reply to Luisa's argument is so inconclusive that the author evidently intends to show that the beauty and power of religion is revealed to the soul and not to the intellect—is a matter of experience, not a process of argument.

It requires a peculiar psychical state to understand Franco's unspoken prayer, imploring death for himself and his little Maria rather than that she adopt the irreligion of her mother.

Though they have parted with such opposite sentiments, Franco and Luisa are still lovers. The letters exchanged pave the way to an ultimate reconciliation. There are mutual concessions and mutual efforts to see things from the other's standpoint. Franco writes about the *Though estranged, still lovers.*

Death of little Maria.

progress of the national idea under the guidance of Cavour. Luisa expatiates on baby's sayings and doings, reassuring her husband with reports of Maria's religious proclivities. Then, unexpected as a thunderbolt, comes the death of little Maria, drowned in the lake.

Luisa's agony and grief are hopeless, while Franco adores the Power that sends sorrow as chastisement and death as salvation.

"'O Lord! O Lord!' said he, with eyes upturned to heaven, 'Thou hast hearkened to me. Thou hast granted me my prayer according to Thy mysterious way. Thou hast taken from me my precious treasure. She is now with Thee, safe and blessed, and waiting for me. Thou wilt unite us.'"

Franco's tears have no bitterness; he adores the Will that in love and mercy has bereaved him, he anticipates the eternal reunion in heaven, and his regenerated soul strives to earn this reward by purification from passion and by sanctifying every deed and thought. Franco perceives his failings, his lack of moral virility; he resolves to devote his life to liberating his country from the oppressor.

Power of religion in daily life.

This sudden perception of duty under the stimulus of a crisis of sentiment is rendered with great sincerity. Fogazzaro is not satisfied with proclaiming that the law of Christ, is the only comforter and sanctifier of human sorrow.

Other apostles of faith have proclaimed this truth with eloquence. Nor is he satisfied with showing the mystic beauty, the poetic grandeur, of religion. He shows religious principles as the motive and guide in the affairs of common life. This conversion of Franco to participation in life's sternest duties, is inspired by the same religion that heretofore had kept him inactive. How complex, how obscure, are the workings of the soul!

Had Franco's character been less carefully delineated, this crisis would be meaningless or improbable, an unconvincing miracle of conversion. Persuaded by Fogazzaro's infectious emotion, we accept it as true: one of the best psychological studies written by an Italian novelist.

Luisa's despair. Franco's submission.

Luisa's despair contrasts with Franco's submission. The abasement of her noble nature, is the psychic counterpart of her husband's regeneration.

She sits by her dead child. No! she is not in fault, she has nothing to repent of! How could she foresee that the child would slip out of the house by that door! If a Supreme Will, a Supreme Power, exists, He alone is to blame! He is the criminal! Oh! if indeed He exists, this cruel God, better that little Maria possess no immortal soul than fall into the clutches of an Almighty Wickedness!

Luisa is crushed, as buoyant natures will be;

nor is there comfort in the daily visits to her child's grave, or in spiritualistic experiments tried with the assistance of Gilardoni. Nothing but a rekindling of old love or the dawn of a new affection can heal this wound.

Reconciliation of Franco and Luisa.

Three years elapse, bringing no change in Luisa's listless, aimless life. Zio Pietro persuades her to go and meet Franco beyond the frontier, at Isola Bella; to say farewell before he joins the army marching against the Austrians. As sudden and complete as the collapse of Luisa's energy under the violence of grief, so sudden and complete is its quickening under the warmth of recovered love and the hope of a second maternity. In a few delightful pages Fogazzaro shows this reawakening of a tenderness that had never really died, of this purifying and mastering love, sweeping away sorrow and misunderstanding, this blending of two beings in a union too intense for verbal expression.

Human love solves life's problems.

Like the Greek rhetoricians, Fogazzaro next seems to disregard his previous arguments, and proposes another quite different solution of the problem. Not Franco's metaphysical dreams, not Luisa's altruism and philosophic argument, but the triumph of human love is now proposed as the true path to the goal of peace and happiness. Obedience to that law of nature that bids

every human heart love and be loved—that is the purpose of life.

Peaceful death of Zio Pietro.

The peaceful death of Zio Pietro when his life's work is done and he has brought about this reconciliation is inspired by this idea. This quiet ending of a life wholly filled by active kindness, self-denial, honesty, and attachment to those dependent on him, indicates the possibilities of unassisted humanity. Zio Pietro has not been guided by a religious dogma, nor has he been troubled with philosophic doubt; he has lived as he dies: in placid obedience to the unquestioned laws of nature.

"Little Old-Fashioned World" compared with "Promesi Sposi."

Like the love story of Renzo and Lucia in the *Promessi Sposi,* this delicate and thorough analysis of the psychic evolution of two loving hearts, is only the principal episode in the book, the link connecting many episodes, sketches, portraits, and descriptions, giving unity to the whole

The historic picture equals in excellence the psychic study; it is more complete, more accurate, than any other such reconstruction except Manzoni's.

The spirit of the times, the patriotic enthusiasm of a few intellectual young men, the opposition of the great number who had been disillusioned by the tragic failure of 1848, the vileness of those who seek advantage from their country's abasement—all this is reproduced with clearness,

serenity, and humour. Though the dowager Marchesa Orsola has stiffened with age into even greater bigotry and presumption, yet we feel that she is better than her actions, and has been deformed by the peculiar circumstances of her surroundings. We do not despise her, though we hate the political conditions, the tainted moral atmosphere, that have produced this result.

"Little Modern World" also elaborates a theory.

Fogazzaro's success with *Little Old-Fashioned World* tempted the writing of a sequel. *Little Modern World* is the story of Franco's and Luisa's son, Piero Maironi, and is a repetition of the same plan, an elàboration of the same ethical theory.

Piero, the heir to that Maironi estate which had troubled the conscience of his parents, has also inherited the antagonistic natures of Franco and Luisa. Circumstances have exaggerated this latent dualism, encouraging both the paternal mysticism and the maternal candour.

His wife, Marchesa Scremin, is insane, and he, having outlived his sorrow and even his pity, suffers in body and in soul. Through prayer and mortification he strives to curb these cravings. He actively participates in public affairs, and accepts the leadership of the clerical party in the Common Council of his native town. He resists the enticements of a pretty maid, but falls in love with the beautiful Jeanne Dessalle, and seeks

advice and help from his friend and confessor, Don Giuseppe.

Piero, sensitive and scrupulous, but nerveless and irresolute, longs for the protection of a cloister; but since a married man cannot become a monk, he knows that he will yield to this temptation—"this spiritual love-making which is more dangerous than those grosser pleasures that bring with them an immediate sense of disgust and are followed by a reaction of shame." *Character of Piero.*

Prayer is the only protection against this temptation known to either priest or Piero, and in this hour of need even this spiritual support fails.

The story is the development of this theme. Jeanne is the embodiment of worldliness, sensualism, and unquenchable intellectual curiosity. She is the Zoroastrian Ahriman that struggles for the possession of this soul, whilst the demented Eliza, who on her death-bed recovers her reason to point out to her husband the way to heaven, impersonates Ormuzd, the purifying spirit. Piero is finally rescued by Divine intervention, and after reading in the air words traced in dazzling light, after hearing whispered voices in the suggestive atmosphere of the chapel near where his wife lies dead, renounces his worldly goods and disappears. Don Giuseppe tells us that he has gone to seek rest in a cloister. *Two powers struggle for Piero's soul.*

Though this study evinces conscientious prepa-

Piero not a living being.

ration and real psychic investigation, it is not interesting. Piero is unnatural! His doubts and fears may awaken an echo in some minds, his torment of unsated desire finds a counterpart in some readers; but breath of life is denied to Piero, and, like Jeanne Dessalle, he only puzzles us. This illogical conclusion to such a crisis may be true, but it is not convincing. When Tolstoi, Huysman, or Bourget have pictured a mystic, or told the story of human reason vanquished by desire and seeking refuge in the torpor of a monastery, they have so carefully prepared their readers' minds as to compel assent. Then, too, Fogazzaro's study of the customs, the gossipping, and fussing of this little country town jar with the presentation of Piero's moral situation.

Excellent description of social life.

In themselves these descriptions of social life are excellent: the refined scepticism, artistic training, ready wit, polished banter of the fashionable set that gathers round the lady Dessalle. The petty intrigues of a town council, the meetings of aldermen, the endless discussions about the pattern of a clerk's tights, are amusing sketches. The portrait of a powerful diplomat who holds in his hands the threads of cobweb intrigues and receives orders from Rome is interesting and accurate, but the very jewel of the book, a marvel of reintegration of psychic and imaginative elements, is the character of Marchesa Nena Scremin. A noble nature cramped

by unfavourable environment, a regal spirit restrained by religious discipline, by the rules of propriety and the dictates of pride, the lack of education and the abundance of native wit—all are presented with such truth that she lives before us.

Faults of "Piccolo Mondo Moderno."

Stern critics pronounce this novel a failure; certainly it is inferior to its predecessor. A novel, mosaic-like, manufactured by the joining of precious fragments, is essentially bad in construction, and does not improve by repetition. The attempt also to preach a sermon under the guise of fiction, unless very well done, is bad for both novel and sermon.

Fogazzaro and Manzoni compared.

Fogazzaro has followed Manzoni's example so faithfully as to reproduce—and aggravate—those two blemishes: lack of unity and obtrusive moralizing. He has also imitated many of the best qualities of his master. Indeed, Manzoni's spirit appears in the details of these books as well as in the general plan. The same quaint humour, the tagging on to every event its moral teaching, are characteristic traits common to both writers.

The thought of Italy has so changed in fifty years that it is interesting to observe, in retrospect, how similar moral situations moulded these two minds, both being strengthened by intellectual solitude. Manzoni's religious ideal received but little encouragement from his contemporaries, more absorbed in political activity,

entranced with the dream of liberty. Fogazzaro, too, stands apart. Uninfluenced by either distracting popularity or seductive followers, his mind has developed in seclusion, unbiassed by extraneous influence.

Both are disciples of Rosmini.

Both Manzoni and Fogazzaro are disciples of the Christian philosopher, Antonio Rosmini, of whom Manzoni wrote that he could teach respect for the human intellect and faith in human reason, whilst recognizing that both are limited in the knowledge of truth. Fogazzaro has attempted to develop these principles into a system which will reconcile religious dogma with modern scientific methods and knowledge. This purpose gives nobility to his romances, and inspires his philosophic and scientific writings.

Fogazzaro, like Pascal, craves certainty.

Fogazzaro is one of those souls that crave for certainty as others crave for light and food. The national scepticism—irreligion—of the Latin spirit jarred on his youthful mind. In the education of Italian youth there are two warring currents of ideas: the conflict between the Church and the State. Every day some childish enthusiasm, some golden dream of God or of patriotism, is chilled or laughed at. From the pulpit he hears invective against the Piedmontese army that has put the Pope in prison, against the Government his father serves. On the other hand, the ridicule of priests is popular, and from the schoolroom is abolished even the name of God.

How Fogazzaro longed for a guide that would help him to attain a certainty! In the same frame of mind Pascal exclaimed:

"Would to God we might know everything by instinct and by sentiment!" and in the humility of his Jansenist soul, *ce génie effrayant,* bowed submissively to the decree that "forbids us to ever attain a certainty, and leaves us the desire of it as a punishment and a remembrance, to make us feel how low we have fallen." Pascal's thirst for reconciliation between the scientifically true and the Divine was lifelong. Death alone brought peace—and knowledge—to his tormented mind. Fogazzaro, under the guidance of Rosmini, has attained serenity of conviction. He perceives a possible solution of the great enigma.

Fogazzaro's solution of life's enigma.

There was, too, another congenial spirit. When he read *Evolution and Its Relations to Religious Thought,* by Professor Joseph Le Conte of California, he discovered a possible conciliation between the Darwinian theory he admired and the Christian dogma he loved. Another American, Father Zalm, gave him a formula for his interpretation of the law of evolution, "the *modus operandi* of Divinity."

Fogazzaro had started from the Rosminian theory, that completed rather than followed Plato, by adding a basis of rationalism to Christianism, and by acknowledging a Divine Origin

of all human thought. Hence his constant theme is the harmony of Religion. With the exultant faith of an apostle, he proclaims "a Divine Cause in accordance with the laws of evolution, urges on the Universe towards the glorification of Itself as to supreme Truth, Beauty, Goodness."

Reconciliation of creation and evolution.

Again he writes: "We are not told in what manner God has made out of clay the bodies of animals and of men. The Bible says '*formavit.*' Now I take this word as a germ. Indeed, just as the biggest tree existed in its germ, which ever retains its own nature, from the simple mysterious beginning up to the gorgeous, luxuriant life, expanding in varied shapes of trunk and boughs, and in the delicately complex organs of leaves and blossoms, our modern science may be said to have been extant in that one word '*formavit,*' that has been sown when man could only grasp its most simple and limited meaning. The very essence, the soul of truth, has lain treasured up in this word, whilst the human intellect was constantly progressing, whilst this simple and limited signification set forth and developed roots and stalk, plunging deeper and deeper into the idea of a creative Cause, rising higher and higher towards the knowledge of the methods which this Cause has adopted ever higher in understanding, and demonstrating the intricate ways across which life has evolved, from the simple to the complex, from clay to Man."

He also claims spiritism as "a new science." *Interest in "spiritism."*

"Come, then, all you whom instinct, faith, and love have inspired with a spiritualist conception of the human soul! Come to the quiet and stern study of occult psychic phenomena! We have a new science to build up—the science of your instinct, of your faith, of your love! . . . . The promised harvest is light in your soul; an ever increasing power and treasures of superior life; a perpetual uprising; because the better it is given us to know the Spirit, the more evident and urgent will appear the reasons for living in accordance with the Spirit."

To a sensitive nature Fogazzaro's spiritism was sure to appeal, a balm to soothe last partings, an earnest of the immortality of the soul. The question is always present to his mind, dimly suggestive of unfathomed mystery in *Malombra,* irradiating mystic bliss in *The Mystery of the Poet,* clinging to the faintest proofs with Luisa Maironi, and boldly proclaiming positive evidence in his lecture. Even the misgivings that have inspired the pages wherein Luisa Maironi strives for comfort in vain attempts to evoke the spirit of her departed child, contain a note of hope. Professor Gilardoni (the medium) suggests: "It would be well to pray." To such a conclusion it was likely that Fogazzaro would resort when in doubt. *Spiritism always present in his thought.*

At one time it was the priestly confessor who

The novelist is now philosopher, priest, and preacher.

was the arbiter of social morality and intellectual activity. In the eighteenth century it was philosophers of the Rousseau school, who dictated the law to eager humanity. Now the novelist has become both philosopher and priest and preacher—is a prime factor in our educational program. He settles—or unsettles—our morals, our religion, our social and political economy; and saves us the necessity of thinking for ourselves. Fogazzaro is the chief exponent in Italy of this theory of the Novel.

Poetical spirit in Fogazzaro's writings.

Fogazzaro's writings are vitalized by innate poetical spirit; he soars into transcendentalism without losing sight of sober reality—is both poet and philosopher. Even when a bird walks we feel that it has wings! Even when a poet condescends to write prose, his winged fancy hovers above his subject and comprehends it differently from the pedestrian painstaking of prosaic minds! And this power in Fogazzaro is both great and original.

Not the sensual pictorial evocation of images common to Italian poets, and intensified in D'Annunzio, and not the shadowy dreaminess of Northern writers, but a blending of the sweetest essence of piety, with a philosophical appreciation of natural beauty, a poetical interpretation of things soberly investigated.

In a lecture, delivered in French, at the

Sorbonne, Fogazzaro traced the image of "*le poète de l'avenir,*" and in expressing his ideal of the poet's mission he—unconsciously—gives the outline of his own moral personality. To borrow one of his own similitudes—as the ghostly phantom on the summit of the Brocken, striking with surprise and terror the homunculus who contemplates it, is only the magnified reproduction of this onlooker; so this idealized "poet of the future," is the image of the lecturer himself.

Fogazzaro's poetic personality.

This poet is more than an artist—he is a leader of souls, an enlightener of minds. He guides humanity in its perpetual evolution, he uses the power "of his art in teaching our souls to better comprehend and better love the Supreme Intellect, the Eternal Principle of Beauty." Through all the vagaries of artistic mythology, mediæval mysticism, modern philosophy, it still remains the poet's appointed duty to reveal a higher law, to evoke grander thoughts, to lift the human soul beyond the limits of actual humanity, into an ideal realm of perfection, which may become a reality.

Leader of souls and enlightener of minds.

Novels penned by a philosopher who has grappled with such problems, by an artist who has conceived such a lofty ideal of his art, could not fail to exert an uplifting influence on their readers. Fogazzaro is second only to D'Annunzio in power to sway and direct the current of Italian romance writing; greater, perhaps, his ascen-

Fogazzaro and D'Annunzio influence Italian fiction.

Fogazzaro's novels mark separation of naturalistic and psychological fiction.

dency in transforming the sentimental and philosophical material of fiction; less, doubtless, his influence on the artistic excellence of style.

Fogazzaro's novels mark the turning-point dividing naturalistic from psychological fiction. He discarded the naturalistic theory of man's irresponsibility, because enslaved by biological and physiological laws and fatally controlled by environment; yet he avoids the Charybdis of psychologists who neglect the objective study of their personages. A human creature is an organism swayed by temperament, and also a moral personality struggling against these tendencies.

Fogazzaro's characters present this double interpretation, yet they never suggest, in prosy autoinvestigations, that they are conscious of this dualism in their nature. The natural impulse or the incidental motive, act on these creatures of fiction as they act on real men and women, with the irresistible power that has sometimes been called destiny, sometimes pronounced sin; and which has only lately been considered as part of an all-embracing, dimly perceived Law.

GIOVANNI VERGA

GIOVANNI VERGA

EXCEPT for world-famous *Cavalleria Rusticana,* Verga's works are scarcely known out of Italy. Yet is he master of his art, a pioneer in realistic fiction, imitated by many. At the beginning of his literary career, Verga's love-stories were indifferent imitations of the French *feuilleton* romance. *Eros, Tigre Reale,* might have been written by anyone, or everyone, of his contemporaries; the action in them might be located in any place, and the personages bear any names, or belong to any social class, without increasing their general vagueness and inconsistency.

Verga a great realist, almost unknown.

The *Story of a Blackbird* was the first revelation of Verga's gift for direct observation. This story of a girl cloistered in a convent and made mad by despair, has passages of power. Readers were startled, and the writer discovered his gift. Henceforth he strives truly to comprehend and describe Life.

The "Story of a Blackbird."

Having inherited those characteristics of the mixed Sicilian race—its fatalism and passivity, its quickness of wit and subtlety—he was in full sympathy with the rude, untutored, yet complex natures of his countrymen. Under the roughness of their manners, notwithstanding centuries

His fatalism and passivity are Sicilian.

of misery, and despite their low moral standards, he discerned nobility of character and sensibility for the grand and beautiful.

Realism of Verga's style.

No foreigner could have described the Sicilian with such loving perspicacity. And, having ascertained the true art formula for his aptitudes, even Verga's failings have helped him to success. He could not write pure Tuscan Italian, his style was not classic, he had little humour, and less wit; but his short, abrupt sentences, his limited vocabulary, have enhanced the general effect by adding a more lifelike colouring, a stronger appearance of reality, to his representation of this rough life, and of the *naïve* ideas of his rustic heroes. He has dispensed with the trick of "dialect" because his simple, rude Italian preserves the very spirit of the speakers.

Open at hazard one of his books and note how he proceeds! As by a lightning-flash, a figure or a scene appears! Not dimly, yet only in part illumined! He has seen the salient points, the projected outline; and this instantaneous vision he reports faithfully, as though by a sort of reflex action, with no softening of lines, no shadowing of colour. In his reader's mind, as in his own, the image will be completed by all the indefinite things which he has guessed and which he unconsciously suggests.

Story of "Nedda."

Nedda is the simple story of a country lass—a vivid picture of hard Sicilian peasant life. In a

low-roofed room, dimly lighted by flaming fagots, tired-out women are crouching on the ground or sitting by the fireside drying their rain-soaked garments. All through the weary, wet day they have been gathering olives, and now wait for their dole of beans from the cauldron boiling on the fire.

"'Nedda! Where are you?'

"'Here,' replied, from the farthest corner, a girl who had been sitting on a heap of fagots.

"'What are you doing there?'

"'Nothing.'

"'What's the matter with you?' . . . .

"'The matter is that her mother is dying,' said one of her companions, just as she might have said, 'She has got a bad toothache.' Nedda, whose chin had been resting on her knees, tightly clasped in her hands, lifted towards the speaker a pair of black eyes, very lustrous but perfectly dry and apathetic; then she bent them down again, and stared at her naked feet."

Character of Nedda.

Then Nedda, coming out of her dark corner, stands before the flickering firelight, and we see her white teeth glittering, her fawn-like eyes, her limbs stunted by poverty and grossly developed by toil, and all her pitiful story is suggested. Neither sullen nor soured, but dejected and sodden, forlorn and friendless; poor Nedda! When she meets a strong, hard-working fellow who promises to wed her she trusts him . . . . as if

he were already her husband. But the young man dies, an inglorious hero, bravely attempting a dangerous job to get money for their marriage. The story concludes with Nedda's prayer of thanks to the Blessed Virgin for the death of her babe, thus saved from a fate like her own.

It is a homely tale, told simply, yet it suggests many complex emotions. Sympathy for the victim is not awakened by ranting denunciation; the nude reality suffices.

Verga's Sicilians are fatalists.

Verga's Sicilians represent the iron law of the survival of the fittest. The people accept it all as fate: the master feels no remorse. Their resignation to suffering suggests Oriental fatalism, yet they trust their saints to reverse the decrees of destiny; they are kindly and hopeful.

"Vagabondaggio" also portrays Sicilian passivity.

Another short story — *Vagabondaggio* (Tramps)—portrays this Sicilian passivity. A *vetturino,* Compare Nanni, is kicked by his mule, and drops to the ground with a broken knee. His companions comfort him with kind words, but they expect him to wait patiently for help from the nearest town. Compare Monis is likely soon to pass, and he will call the wise woman who sets a broken limb so much better than a surgeon. Two days later, as the man lies on the stable litter where he first dropped, the leg is dressed by the old hag, who masticates the plastering stuff, then wipes her hands on her touselled hair, and bids her patient "thank the

Madonna that she has come in time to save him from the hands of the surgeons and exert the gift God has granted her."

With Sicilian submissiveness the unlucky carrier accepts a shortened leg, the loss of his mule—which goes to pay the woman—and a hard and ill-paid situation in the place where he received his injury. His wife had been lying-in when the accident happened, and tried to jump from bed and hasten to his side; afterwards she cools down, but is always going to see her man "some day"—and never budges. He, too, often thinks of the brats and their mother at home, but can never afford the few pence the carter would charge for carrying him; and thus the years slip by without their meeting. When the Compare hears that his wife is ill, he waits for better news; when told that she is worse, he philosophically concludes that it is not worth the while moving now—to find her dead.

"Nanni," a picture of prosperous selfishness.

Another of these tramps is his son Nanni, an eleven-year-old boy. He tramps out of his village with a miner, then becomes servant to a quack doctor, and finally settles down cosily, married to a rich widow. A little girl, the companion of his early days, comes back to her village after leading a wretched life. "The devil himself would not have known her, so worn out, eaten up, as she was by starvation and hard work. 'Don't you know me, Compare Nanni? I'm

Grazia, do you remember?' But he sent her away for fear of his wife. . . . . He wanted now to enjoy quietly the peace and good things Heaven had granted him, and the wife God had given him."

Verga's scenes of low life in cities.

This sober picture of prosperous selfishness, could not be made more effective by strong words. Though he excels in these descriptions of rural life, Verga has also painted striking scenes of low life in cities. He describes the complicated sensations and peculiar wretchedness of primitive creatures, forced to grapple with the perplexing hardships of city life. From the crowd of a great city Verga picks out the solitary soul who treads the throbbing thoroughfare as in a desert, wrapped in his dream, unable to understand the passing show.

Neapolitan low life described in "Artisti da Strapazzo."

Artisti da Strapazzo (Second-rate Artists) is such a story. In a third-rate Neapolitan *café chantant* the singer Assunta makes a piteous *début* in the white gown and tinsel jewelry of Elvira in *Ernani*. She has no voice, no talent, no courage; if she had average intelligence she would turn to any other profession; but she is one of those helpless, half-awakened souls, innocent even in their wrong-doing. She has floated into Naples, a spar from a shipwreck, and owes to the kindness of the *café* owner this opportunity of singing, and the chance of a meal. Hissed off the diminutive stage, "in a corner of the kitchen,

amidst the chaffing of scullions and the steam of stewing-pans, the singer sat at the common table with the cooks, the waiters, the baritone, and the pianist who played accompaniments. Despite his formidable beard, this pianist was a good fellow, and tried to comfort her.

Assunta, the half-awakened soul.

"'This hall is wretchedly dull. . . . . You will do better another time, when you are in full possession of your voice.' The poor girl answered with looks of meek gratitude. The baritone, who wore a woolly overcoat over the glittering suit of armour for Charles V., and a napkin tucked under his chin, ate silently.

"'One must be born an artist,' he sentenced, with his mouth full."

In all this crowded, sinful Naples, Assunta knows only these two men. The *maestro* is a kind soul and would aid her, but he is ruled by a jealous mistress, and is dependent upon her bounty; whilst the baritone, though he cares little for this lachrymose beauty, treats her to pretty speeches. Poor little Assunta! She almost starves! She denies herself everything but the penny for a cup of coffee at the Café Nazionale! There she sits all the evening, and hears her Bohemian fellow-artists dicuss their plans and vent the most startling opinions over a pot of beer.

One evening she accepts a glass of beer, because she has eaten nothing all day, and is exhausted. When she goes out, dizzy and faint

and shivering in the rain, the baritone persuades her to share his lodging. The author never pleads for the wretched girl: he thinks—and rightly—that her position reveals the extenuating circumstance. Nor is this baritone utterly despicable: he knows no better; he gives half his bread and half his bed to this homeless child, and when he is called away, he leaves her with sincere regret.

Pathetic is the meeting, some months later, of the *maestro* and Assunta. Both have given up music, both are struggling for daily bread, both are ashamed of this surrender of their "Art," and each is sorry for the other as they sit side by side, unable to put their thoughts into words. Yet they understand one another, and perceive the eternal verity, that love and pity have no shame. Neither asks for forgiveness because neither condemns.

"I Malavoglia," Verga's first novel.

Verga's first novel, *I Malavoglia,* created a sensation and bitter criticism. A novel written without a plan!—a series of meaningless dialogues!—clumsy reiterations!—proverbial nonsense, just as it was uttered by a group of Sicilian fishermen in an out-of-the-way hamlet! This could not pass for a literary work! Rather it was a challenge, written in defiance of all accepted rules! But as we read this book, we discover that we have made the acquaintance of many persons. They are no longer indistinct

groups of peasants, or fishermen, or "hands," all alike and all uninteresting. Individuals emerge from the mass; we enter into their plans, share their hopes, and—we love them.

Blessed prerogative of our human nature! That we must ever love that which we are made to know well! From creatures of phantasy we may turn aside unmoved; but from life, throbbing, pulsing life, the very human being we may meet any day, we cannot! Verga, by obliterating his personality, by refraining from either attenuation or exaggeration, puts us in close contact with the personages of his stories, and compels our interest.

Characters and characteristics of "I Malavoglia."

These Malavoglia are fishermen. The grandfather, Padron 'Ntonio (Antonio), rules with a strong hand all the brood: his son, his daughter-in-law, and his grandchildren; and when a storm has wrecked their boat, and the sea has swallowed up both his son and the cargo in which he had invested borrowed money, the old man's silent despair is tragic. How they all struggle to repurchase their poor homestead, and recover their position in that small, old-fashioned world which expects a man to pay his debts!—their unwearied efforts, their self-denial. All this is a very real human tragedy. And it is all seen in the broad Sicilian sunlight, which reveals nakedly, pitilessly, everything.

Padron 'Ntonio does not feel like a hero, is not

Padron 'Ntonio is the hero.

considered one. His honesty is a homely virtue: he has borrowed money, and he must pay it back—that is all! His authority is as unquestioned as that of a patriarch in Palestine or of a Roman father. Only 'Ntonio, junior—his eldest grandson, recently a soldier—is sceptical. Idle garrison life and dim notions of what is going on outside his hamlet have awakened new desires, aspirations, and have disqualified him for the old life without fitting him for another. He wants to go away, ... somewhere, ... and become rich quickly.

"Padron 'Ntonio replied: 'What will we do when we are rich?' 'Ntonio scratched his head, wondering what he would like to do.

"'Why, ... we would do like other people. We would do nothing! Go and live in a large town, and eat meat and macaroni every day.'

"'Go you in town! Go, if you like! I stay and die where I was born!'

"As the old man thought of the house wherein he was born, now belonging to other people, he bent low his head."

Young 'Ntonio, the grandson.

Young 'Ntonio ventilates his great ideas at the village *osteria*—how fish are scarce because steamboats drive them away; how the telegraph wires dispense rain and sunshine according to directions sent from *il governo*. This mysterious being, "Government," he blames for everything amiss; from heavy taxes to the necessity of mili-

tary establishment. "Because, you see, in the days of battle the king sends a man to watch each soldier, and shoot him if he does not obey."

The buxom keeper of the *osteria* smiles on the voluble young fellow, encourages him to stay later and drink an extra glass. She loves him until she discovers that he is a good-for-nothing, and then she casts him off. 'Ntonio meets bad companions and takes to smuggling; in one of their nightly expeditions he stabs a customs officer.

Misfortunes of Padron 'Ntonio.

The money so painfully hoarded goes to the lawyers. The old man drops down in a fit; the family is humbled by the discovery that the wounded man was the seducer of 'Ntonio's youngest sister; the girl elopes with her lover; then she drops lower, and, like her brother, is lost to her little world. What remains of the family again attempts the great task, though their chief is now helpless.

"Every day Mena—his granddaughter—would lead him by the hand to a place in the sun, where he would sit for hours, repeating in his dotage: 'Death is never coming for me.' So that people would ask him, jokingly, where death had gone to. Every Saturday night Alessi—his grandson—would bring him his week's pay, as if he had been able to understand, and he would nod his head, whilst the young man added the

handful of coins to the sum hoarded inside the bed."

Death of Padron 'Ntonio. When he is quite bedridden he insists on being taken to the poorhouse, despite his grand-children's loving opposition. In their absence a neighbour drives him there. In the cart, with a blanket stretched overhead against the glaring sun, the old man sits, supported by a village girl, Nunziata, and the kind neighbour. Padron 'Ntonio lies stiff in the hospital bed, with only his eager eyes alive in his face, watching the door through which the visitors come in. The long-wished-for house has been redeemed, but when they come to fetch him, the old man is dead.

The ambition of Don Gesualdo. Mastro Don Gesualdo—the principal character of Verga's second novel—belongs to a society somewhat superior to that of the Malavoglia. Mastro Gesualdo is one of those peasants who have "heavy brogans and sharp wits." He has made money by hard work and open eyes. Now he wants to be called "Don," and to marry a poor girl of noble family. For he knows the advantage of a grand alliance. Here he sits, in shirtsleeves and slippers, in front of his door; on the table are set boiled eggs and fried onions; he listens to the lowing of his cattle, inhales the perfume of his hay, and casts kind glances at *Diodata, the farm girl.* the farm girl, Diodata, who has loved him in less prosperous times and borne him two sons.

"Don Gesualdo rested both his elbows on the

table. 'Why don't you eat, too? What's the matter with you?' Diodata, sitting on an empty cask in a corner, was silent, but on hearing these words her eyes shone like those of a dog patted by its master.

"'You must be hungry, too. Why don't you eat?' Diodata had her dish on her lap; she crossed herself, and said: '*Benedicite* to you, master!'

"She ate very slowly, her shoulders stooping, and her head bending low; the light fell on her heavy coil of hair, as soft as silk despite the fogs and biting breezes of this hillside. A lady would have been proud of that chestnut plait and of those hazel eyes, timid and caressing as those of a faithful hound, untiring in its efforts to conquer its master's good grace. *The martyrdom of Diodata.*

"The whole expression of her face was wistful—a face blotched, wasted, and furrowed by hunger and brutal caresses, parched by the glare of a pitiless sun, pinched by breadless days and paled by sleepless nights; her eyes alone shone youthful inside their dark hollows. As she sat there, almost doubled up, she looked like a little girl. Only the skin on the nape was so white, where the sun could not reach. Her blackened hands were small and skinny.

"'That's it. Eat on! I am sure you feel tired, too.' She smiled a pleased smile, but did

not look up. Her master handed her the wine flagon.

"'Here, have a pull at it. Don't be foolish!' Diodata hesitated, wiped her mouth with the back of her hand, then, grasping the flagon, she threw back her head. Warm and vivifying, the wine went down at every gulp of her amber throat. Her youthful breast seemed to swell. Her master laughed.

"'Brava! Brava! You can play on this trumpet as well as anyone.'

"She too smiled as she again drew the back of her hand across her lips, and muttered: 'Your health, master.'"

Diodata cast off.

This rustic idyll assumes its real character in the ensuing scene at nightfall: Mastro Gesualdo has been bestowing praises on his slave for her untiring hard work and devotion, then brusquely in an altered tone:

"'Do you know they want me to marry?' The girl gave no answer, and he continued: 'I want to rise in the world. . . . . You see, an alliance with great people. . . . . There's no getting on without their countenance . . . . so they want me to be related to them. Instead of being against me, they will side with me. Eh? . . . . What do you say?'

"She sat with her face hidden in her hands, and after a while muttered in a tone that went to his heart:

"'*Vossignoria* . . . . you are the master.'

"'Of course I am . . . . I only mentioned the matter to talk it over . . . . because . . . . I trust you . . . . and, sooner or later, it must come to this. Why should I have been toiling and pinching all this time if I am not to have children.'

"He caught a glimpse of her face as she held it very low; it was wet with tears.

"'What are you weeping for, you goose?'

"'Nothing, master. Never mind me.'

"'What are you thinking about? Speak out.'

"'Nothing! . . . . Nothing, Don Gesualdo.'

"'*Santo e santissimo!*' he growled, as he ran all round the barn floor, grumbling and puffing. Diodata followed her master, muttering in a softly submissive tone:

"'Why are you so angry, master? What did I say?'

"'I am angry with my fate. . . . . I find nothing but trouble and care wherever I turn. . . . . You too, now, in tears! . . . . You silly goose! Are you afraid that in any case I should desert you . . . . and leave you helpless . . . . in the street?'

"'No, master . . . . I wasn't thinking of myself, but of those two innocents . . . . '

"'What about them? . . . . That's the way of the world! The parish has to provide for them! Don't I pay my share of the taxes?' He scratched his head, and went on: 'Look here!

Everyone comes into this world under some particular star! You grew up all by yourself, like a weed in a field. Your very name tells your story, "Dio data" . . . . as well say belonging to no one. Yet there is a chance of your being a baron's daughter, and maybe there are brothers and sisters of yours driving in their own coaches . . . . feeding on fowls and pigeons. . . . . The Lord is for us all. Haven't you managed to get on? Have I not myself carved my own way?'"

Diodata married. The arguments by which Don Gesualdo persuades Diodata to marry and leave him free to marry, are objectionable enough, yet the girl has nothing to object. Centuries of civilization have slipped by in vain for this modern slave; she knows nothing of her rights, nothing of the reparation her master owes to her. Indeed, though these Sicilians are Christian in words, in morals they are little better than their Oriental ancestors. No one is shocked at Don Gesualdo's disposal of his discarded mistress, since he has given her husband compensation money.

Don Gesualdo's unhappy marriage. Donna Bianca Trao leads a sad and sickly life after the marriage. Yet Don Gesualdo is not cruel; he is generous with money, but he insists on having his daughter educated in a fashionable convent, with the daughters of barons and dukes. The little upstart discards her father's surname for her mother's, as being more aristocratic. Her normal impulses are thwarted by her edu-

cation and by her father's opposition to a love match with a poor cousin. A beggared duke condescends to take her money, make her his wife, and give her a title; and she becomes a fashionable doll. Don Gesualdo's wife dies, his daughter deserts him, his friends—save Diodata —forget him; finally sickness comes, and then a dreadful agony begins—the agony of separation from his hoarded wealth.

He loses wife and friends.

But Don Gesualdo is not entirely forgotten; his son-in-law removes the sick man to Palermo on pretence of getting for him better medical attendance. "When Don Gesualdo could be taken out of his bed, they put him inside a chaise, and then started. It was a rainy day; the well-known houses, the familiar faces flitted before the windows of the vehicle; his sister had kept out of the way, angry at my lord the Duke playing the master beforetimes, and only the aged farm labourer, Nando, was there to bid him God-speed and attend him as far as the end of the village. As they passed along Masera Street a voice cried out: 'Stop! Stop!' and Diodata came to say good-bye. She walked up to the chaise, stopped close by her master, but could find no words; she stood there leaning on the window-frame, nodding at him.

Diodata alone is faithful.

"'Ah, Diodata! So you have come to bid me God-speed!' said he. She nodded in assent, and tried very hard to smile, whilst her eyes filled with

tears. 'Poor Diodata! You have not forgotten your master, as others have done!' He put out his head, probably expecting to see someone else, but as it was now raining hard he promptly drew back again.

"'Mind what you are about, standing there bareheaded in the rain! . . . . You always used to . . . . Hey, do you remember?' 'Yes, master, I do!' she answered, accompanying her words with reiterated nods—'yes, master, I do! Wish you a pleasant journey!' She walked slowly away, turning silently, sadly, submissively, to look back from her door."

His savings spent by the Duchess, his daughter.

In his daughter's *palazzo,* in Palermo, Don Gesualdo is a fish out of water. The costliness of everything, all the servants, the bustle, are appalling. And it is his money that pays for this extravagance!

He passes hours calculating what sums must be daily wasted on this host of grooms, stable-boys, serving-men, maids, and cooks, all living on his daughter's money, all supported by the rents of the lands he had given her—those lands he had coveted so long, toiled so hard for! With such an outlay what might not he have done! Marshes drained and converted into rich ploughland! Rough mountain sides into pastures or vineyards! Gangs of labourers toiling and sweating to heap up riches for him! Riches! He thinks of nothing else, even now, at the brink of the grave!

Very effective is the death-scene. "Suddenly, in the night, he grew worse. The servant, who slept in the next room, heard him tossing and groaning until daybreak; but took no heed of what he called 'a new whim'; but turned in his bed and courted sleep, pretending not to hear. At last, worried by that continual grumbling, he went to see what was the matter. 'My daughter!' muttered the sick man, in a voice which did not sound like his own. 'Go for my daughter!'

Effective death-scene of Don Gesualdo.

"'What ails the old fool? Can't he let a fellow sleep?' Now the sick man growled louder than a double bass, his breath came with a hissing sound. Whenever the servant dropped asleep, a strange noise would startle him, a hoarse gurgling, as if someone had been panting and struggling close at hand. He could not stand it any longer, but got up with many a muttered oath. 'Now, what's the matter with him? . . . . Not turned crazy all at once?' Don Gesualdo did not speak: he lay panting on his back. The servant lifted the lampshade, the better to see the face, then rubbed his eyes and was about to quickly turn in and sleep; but stopped a moment, lamp in hand, wondering whether it was better to wait awhile or go down at once and wake his mistress and rouse the household.

"Don Gesualdo in the meantime became more calm, his breath came shorter, he made several grimaces, with his eyes fixed and staring. In an instant he stiffened, and all was over."

MATILDE SERAO

MATILDE SERAO

"Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile."

WHAT visions of beauty, what scenes of misery, are evoked by the word "Naples"! Vesuvius, Ischia, Sorrento, Capri—jewels set in an azure sea, beneath a sky of gold! And oh, what mournful misery in that city's slums!

Serao's work the reflex of Naples.

The stories and novels of Matilde Serao echo this complex emotion. Vivid is her description of the gorgeous Neapolitan landscape; affecting is her tale of Neapolitan misery.

Her birth and ancestry.

Matilde Serao is a microcosm of her native city: her dark complexion, luminous eyes, plump figure, ringing laughter, as well as her half Greek origin, are traits which she shares with the many descendants of the mingled races who peopled Magna Græcia. Her mother, Paolina Bonely, belonged to the ancient family of Scanavy that gave emperors to Trebizond. In Patrasso—a little town of the province of Acaia—Paolina met and married Francesco Serao, a Neapolitan exile. Matilde, the only child of this marriage, was carefully trained by her mother. After the death of his wife Francesco Serao and his daughter returned to Naples and settled there.

Serao truly interprets Neapolitan sentiment.

Besides the genuine merit of Matilde Serao's first writings, certain circumstances may account for her rapid success. Neapolitans are not reconciled to their union with Italy. The loss of some ancient privileges is resented, the Piedmontese Government is hated because opposed to the *Camorra* and conspiracy. Matilde Serao's vindication of her people answered to a national feeling, and Neapolitans were grateful that she could describe their misery with sympathy, and attenuate their faults with affectionate comprehension.

"Il Ventre di Napoli."

In *Il Ventre di Napoli,* Serao charged the Central Government with responsibility for the cholera epidemic of 1884, and for Neapolitan misery.

"This book is too small to contain all the great truth about Neapolitan misery, and it is also too small to hold the humble and strong love of a Neapolitan heart. Let this agonized cry of a distressed soul, sound a warning and an entreaty. May those who can act, hearken to this prayer! Naples must not be abandoned, now that the cholera is passed. . . . . Do not leave her in poverty, filth, and ignorance; helpless and tradeless! Do not destroy with her the poetry of Italy!"

Abject misery of Neapolitan workmen.

Many of the facts revealed by Matilde Serao in this book, were ignored by most Italians or accepted with indifference. Who cared about the food of the *lazzeroni!* Who realized that

even the coarsest meat is by some only tasted once a week, and by many never! Matilde Serao insists that the Neapolitans are by nature better gifted than many people, but that even their best qualities have been distorted into vices, through unhappy circumstance. She claims that the Neapolitan workman is neither lazy nor sensual; that he toils fourteen hours a day for starvation wages; that his wife and sisters would be as devoted to their homes and children as other mothers; if they were not compelled by hunger to seek work.

Serao's defence of Neapolitans.

Serao explains why the passion for the lotto has expanded so as to become the canker plague of Naples.

And of gambling.

For a race that has inherited from the Orientals the love of free space and open air, and from Greek ancestors a craving for beauty, and is reduced to poverty and filth in sunless slums, she claims a right to live "in a greater freedom of imagination," to indulge in visions that may help them to forget reality, as the sufferer lulls his intolerable pain with an anæsthetic. She concludes:

"Providentially the Neapolitan is enabled to begin afresh, every week, his dream of happiness. For six days he lives in the growing hope that stretches far beyond the limits of reality. During six days he enjoys such things as he will never possess—a clean house, wholesome food,

fresh air, a sunbeam on the floor, a cradle for the babe, decent clothes for the wife, and a new hat for the husband. . . . ." All these things, which real life never grants him, the Neapolitan possesses, in spirit, from Sunday to Saturday; that is to say, from the moment he has taken his ticket at the National Lottery, to the moment of the announcement of the winning numbers. "At four o'clock on Saturday afternoon, despair knows no bounds; but on Sunday morning their hopefulness has recovered from the shock, and the weekly dream begins anew."

Gambling universal in Italy. All Italians play lotto, but it is only in the South, and particularly among the lowest Neapolitans, that the guessing of the numbers likely to be drawn becomes a sort of popular insanity. Among these wretched people superstition and divination run riot. "Have you seen a dead man in your dreams? play 48. He spoke? then it's 49. He wept? it's 75. Have you been frightened? 90. A young fellow has been stabbed by a woman? 17; the blood spilt, 41; the knife, 90."

The Assistito. There are weekly papers, agencies, and individuals who grow rich out of their pretended science. "The *Assistito*—the man who holds communication with the spirits—is generally a pallid epileptic who has, or pretends to have, hallucinations. He does no work, he speaks by enigmas, and pretends to suffer cruel penance. . . . . The *Assistito* has many dupes, and is to

be met in the streets always attended by four or five persons who worship him and watch for his slightest word."

Superstition that friars know winning numbers.

But the staff on which popular belief leans with unshaken consistency is "the friar who knows the numbers." That is a dogma. "If he does not tell them, it is because the Lord has laid His command upon him not to help sinners; if he tells them, and they do not come out, it is because the player has not had sufficient faith; if he tells them, and they do come out, then the news spreads instantly, and the friar is cursed with dangerous popularity. An artist who has made one masterpiece: woe to him if he does not go on with another! The friar who has only given two good numbers—the *ambo*—may still hope for some peace; but the friar who has dictated the *terno,* the three numbers which have come out, must beware! He will be bribed with gifts, promises, alms, masses; he will be entreated by children and old women; they will lie in wait for him at the church door, by the confessional, at the convent gate; they will apply to his mother, brother, aunt; they will besiege him from morn till night, kidnap him, torment him, starve him to death, in hopes that with his dying breath he may breathe the numbers. Such things have happened."

The utmost expression of a Neapolitan's

misery is not "I haven't eaten to-day," but "I have not been able to play this week."

Popularity of the clandestine lottery.

When a Neapolitan possesses only two soldi, he stakes them at the *gioco piccolo* (clandestine lottery). "The agents of this fraudulent lottery are women. A filthy, tattered female goes about the streets, carrying in a pocket under her apron, a register. The player comes up to her, gives two soldi, and declares the numbers he means to play; in exchange he receives a dirty bit of paper, on which his numbers are written, and the promise of one scudo for the *ambo,* or two numbers, and forty for the *terno,* or three numbers.[1] Everyone knows the woman and her trade, yet no one denounces her. She is considered as a friend, and, though she swindles and cheats, she is an ally. It is better to let her have the money than the Government!"

Usury results from gambling insanity.

Usury in its worst form is the consequence of the lotto, and Matilde Serao paints three pictures of harpies, which are as impressive as some of Goya's *acqueforti.*

"A poor woman requiring five francs to pay her rent will ask them of Donna Carmela, who 'gives money on credit.' . . . . Donna Carmela is a fat woman, who pretends to some genteel trade, a fashionable *pro-forma* profession, leaving her leisure for her real business, which is

[1] The legal winning is much more—60,000 times the stake for the *terno.*

money-lending. On this first interview Donna Carmela is soft-spoken and encouraging; she even condescends to acknowledge that she too, in former times, has been hard pressed for money; and she sends her client away, comforted and satisfied with her five francs. No, with her four francs and a half, the loan having been agreed for eight days, and the interest, ten soldi for every five francs (10 per cent.), is paid in advance. Now, it generally happens that at the end of the week the poor woman has not got the five francs to pay her debt, and entreats Donna Carmela to accept another week's interest.

"Thus four, five, ten weeks elapse, and every week she pays the 10 per cent. interest. After the fifth week Donna Carmela grows angry, cries out that she does not want the interest, but the capital of her money—of *il sangue suo* (her blood). On the doorsteps, at the entrance of factories, by every shop, you can hear the angry accents of Donna Carmela. No man dares rebel against this fat termagant, who knows her power. Shrewd and prudent, bold and foul-mouthed, she calls herself the friend of the poor, who treat her with shocking ingratitude.

Other forms of usury.

"Donna Raffaela gives goods on credit. She buys a stock of cotton or linen stuff and coloured handkerchiefs at a low price, and sells them to the poorest people. For each object the price is doubled; this makes a first gain; but besides

this, she exacts an interest of 10 per cent. a week. These debts, perpetually renewed, weigh like lead on the poor debtor for many months. The gown becomes tatters, the chemise rags, and the miserable wretch has paid ten times their value, yet the debt remains the same. Donna Raffaela is enraged, she snatches from her victim's neck the kerchief she has sold her, she plucks the apron from her waist, crying out, 'These things are mine! thou hast robbed me of my blood!'"[1]

Donna Gabriela type of pawnbroker.

Donna Gabriela is the pawnbroker who condescends to lend thirty-six francs on a new gown that had cost two hundred and fifty, and when her victim comes to redeem her loan she pretends that she has had to sell it for thirty francs. "Next week Donna Gabriela is seen at the theatre in that same gown. For women of this sort are particularly fond of adorning themselves with the objects they have on pawn, and many a wretched one will enjoy the sight of the pawnbroker sailing gorgeously out to church wearing her own earrings, the next-door neighbour's gold chain, and the lady of the third floor's velvet cape. Behind the doors and windows, when the pawnbroker walks by, there are stifled sobs, tears gulped down, and sudden pallours, and she passes, like an Indian idol, worshipped with offerings of blood and gold."

[1] A Neapolitan always speaks of his money as "*il sangue mio*" (my blood).

Addio Amore, Fantasia, Le Amanti, and other sentimental novels were indifferent imitations of foreign models. Two sisters and a man are the characters of *Addio Amore,* which pretends to represent the fashionable Neapolitan world. Anna, the eldest sister, elopes with a man who hastens to abandon her. After a short illness Anna again falls in love, this time with Cesare Dias, her tutor, a sceptic beau twenty years her senior, but who has so dazzled her young fantasy—and her ardent senses—that she implores him to marry her, though he protests his indifference, and warns her that he will renounce none of his independence. Cesare Dias is a cad! He condescends to marry this wife, and then intrigues with her sister Laura. When Anna's efforts to part the lovers prove vain, she commits suicide. As her every impulse is distorted, she shoots herself in the rooms of a young man who has long loved her.

Serao's imitations of foreign models.

The book is immoral, and there is intentional wantonness in its love scenes.

Cuore Inferno, Fantasia, Il Romanzo della Fanciulla, though more readable, belong to the same category.

But there is another Matilde Serao capable of better things. A pretty and popular short story—*All'erta Sentinella*—is the turning-point of this fortunate evolution. The plot is sentimental, the characters ill defined, but the descrip-

Achieves originality in "All'erta Sentinella."

tions are inspired by a loving communion with nature, a sympathy with her fellow-creatures, which is the *leit motif* of Serao's best production.

Strong description in "All'erta Sentinella."

Nisida, the prison island, is seen in the distance from the sunlit road leading from Naples to Bagnoli. Out of a prison-van alight four *carabinieri* and a miserable, pale, handcuffed convict. Presently they step into the boat. "Now the boat and her dismal freight were rowed towards Nisida, slowly advancing as the rowers bent low over their oars. On that beautiful sea, the dream of lovers and poets, the boat carrying the convict glided, dull and gloomy! The trusty *carabinieri* sat by the man's side watchfully. But the prisoner had no thought of escaping. He even looked about him with something like pleasure, as if he appreciated this trip on the sea in the open air, with the rocking motion of the boat."

The first landing of the convict on the island, the rivetting of an iron chain round his ankle and wrist, the evening prayer in the dim chapel, under the watchful gaze of the *carabinieri,* are strongly told. But how clumsy, how unlikely the plot! Out of what romantic, dust-eaten volume has this criminal stepped?—the parricide that has never felt the slightest pang of remorse, and who yet so suddenly loves the sickly son of the prison director, and when the boy dies, risks and loses life in a mad attempt to follow the little corpse sailing towards Naples!

Plot is clumsy and unlikely.

The story closes with a vivid description of the whole island roused by the cries of sentinels and reports of guns. The horror of the midnight chase, the confusion in the prison, the roll-call of the convicts, as of sheep in a pen, the admiration and envy roused in these creatures by one successful escape and one merciful death, are powerfully rendered.

"Storia di una Monaco."

In *Storia di una Monaco* (Story of a Nun) Matilde Serao has attempted to depict the complex life of young women in fashionable Neapolitan society. The modern society miss is complex, difficult to define; she has nerves, ideas, emotions—all sorts of things. Many a modern psychologist has required an entire volume to depict the complexities of one of these modern Proteuses; Matilde Serao boldly introduces a score in a few pages.

Serao's vivid portrayal of character.

These Neapolitan belles meet to sew for the poor. As each girlish figure comes in, is introduced in a few characteristic traits, she adds colour to the picture.

Angela Cantelma, beautiful, high born, romantically consumptive, and heart broken; Elfrida Kapnist, with her large black eyes, gipsy hair, and uncertain origin; Maria Galli-Pausania, rich as a queen, and as noble born; Olga Bariotine, about to marry a fashionable swindler, and others are there, chatting and sewing near Eva Muscettola, who has started this charitable

work because her loving heart is filled with an ideal of service and self-sacrifice so different from society selfishness.

Eva Muscettola's love and despair.

Again these girls are shown at a party on board a man-of-war. Eva Muscettola has met Innico Althan, and loves him. She is intensely happy, but soon receives the knell to all her joy. Her own mother is a preferred rival. The tragedy culminates in another worldly gathering. Eva is about to become a nun, and fashionable Naples witnesses the ceremony.

She takes the veil.

"The clock struck eleven as the novice entered the church and walked up its length to the great altar. She was dressed in a trailing gown of white brocade, a veil, fixed over her light brown curls, shrouded her in its ample folds, diamonds flashed in her delicate ears and from the costly clasp round her throat; in her hands, gloved in white kid, she held a bouquet of orange blossoms and a prayer-book bound in white velvet. White! All as spotlessly white as her young face! . . . .

"After kneeling and crossing herself at the foot of the altar, Eva walked up to her mother. She did not embrace her, but kissed her hand. The Duchess had first offered her cheek, but drew back with a penitent look. The novice knelt down between her two sponsors, and the Cardinal began the mass. His utterance was slow, his movements painful, age and asceticism had weakened his body."

When mass was over, and Eva had crossed the church and gone out by the cloister door, a great silence came upon the assembly.

"Suddenly, close by the altar, a little door was thrown open—the door that leads into the cloister—and Eva appeared on the threshold. Stripped of her white gown, veil, jewels—of all the worldly array—a dark brown Franciscan robe descended in large folds from her throat to her feet, girded round her waist by the white cord. Her feet were hidden, her hands were white as wax, her beautiful hair hung loosely over her shoulders." *Ceremony of taking the veil.*

The ceremony proceeds impressively. The cutting of the heavy coil of hair by the Abbess, so old that her trembling hands can scarcely hold the scissors; a black veil is thrown over the shorn head, "suddenly diminished like that of a corpse," the lying down of the novice under a funeral pall, whilst the psalm for the dead is chanted over her, and the solemn adjuration thrice repeated by the Cardinal over the prostrate form; all the elements of a grand picture are there, but they are so confused with extraneous matter that it is difficult to separate them from immaterial details.

The life of *Riccardo Joanna* is a study of journalism. It contains the career of both father and son Joanna, who struggle to keep up appearances, but fail hopelessly and end miserably. *"Ricardo Joanna."*

Each little scene is well drawn, the figures are soberly delineated in the style suited to the environment, yet the book is dull. The writer has observed deeply, has carefully dissected her subjects, but she has not re-embodied them and given them life.

"San Giovannino o la Morte," a study of Neapolitan low life.

In *San Giovannino o la Morte,* a bit of Neapolitan low life is rendered with singular fidelity. The threadbare story of an innocent girl jilted by her lover, who prefers the mature charms of the rich stepmother, is clumsily developed. But the portraits of the elderly pawnbroker who despises her clients for their misfortunes, the terror she inspires, the complicity of the neighbours, when she ill-treats her stepdaughter, are vividly rendered. The sleek, unscrupulous fellow who worms himself into her favour by aiding in the management of her nefarious agency, is just the sort of partner she deserves, and her punishment satisfies our sense of justice.

Serao compared with Dickens.

In such masterful little pieces Serao resembles Dickens. She has the same sensibility, perceives the different aspects of a character or of a scene, the comic as well as the tragic expression; yet she is too impulsive for that humour which requires a sort of sceptic irony. But in ability to present a whole picture in a few bold strokes, of portraying a type in a few sentences, she is unrivaled.

Matilde Serao is at her best in her short com-

positions, complete pictures of some particular phase of life. *Scuola Normale Femminile,* is a sketch of those active, fussy, brave girls who struggle to obtain the diploma of schoolmistress, which means a life of overwork, for a meager salary. These girls are genuinely Italian, or rather, Neapolitan. Another story describes the young women employed in telegraph offices; the contrast between their work, implying a high state of civilization, and the simplicity of their natures, is striking.

Short stories better than her novels.

The best of these short stories, a masterpiece of *genre,* is the sketch entitled *Terno Secco.* The term *terno secco* is used by lottery gamblers to indicate that they will only claim the winnings if all the three numbers chosen are drawn. In such an event they are paid sixty thousand times the sum staked. Of course such a contingency is most unlikely, and *terno secco* is only played when the three numbers are considered especially good.

The story opens in the modest lodging of a French teacher and her daughter. It is early in the morning, no one is stirring except Tommasina, the servant, who prepares the coffee and puts the room in order as best she can, considering her advanced pregnancy. Presently the Signora rises, as she must start on her daily round of lessons. She lingers wearily over her cup of coffee, made more substantial by the ad-

Story of "Terno Secco."

dition of a beaten egg. This luxury weighs on the conscience of the Signora, who wants to share it with her daughter, but Caterina is bustling about.

The shabby-genteel French teacher.

"The Signora, having put on her bonnet, came back to the kitchen door and whispered to Tommasina. She was warning her to be very thrifty in her marketing to-day, as she could only give her three francs.

"'Can you manage it?' queried the lady.

"'I'll try,' said the other, thoughtfully, whilst from the next room Caterina was calling out, as she put on her hat:

"'Tommasina, I want some apricots for dinner!'

"'Yes, Signorina!'

"'Tommasina, mind you buy the black ribbon for my hat!'

"'Yes, Signorina!'

"'Are you coming, Piccina?' called her mother, standing at the open door.

"'Remember, I must find all these things when I come home, Tommasina!'

"'So you will, Signorina, and may the Madonna bless you!'"

Tommasina discovers the lucky numbers.

After the departure of the ladies Tommasina proceeds with her day's work. As she takes the sheets from her mistress's bed, a folded paper drops from under the pillow to the ground. The servant picks it up, notices the three numbers

written there, evidently three numbers which the Signora intended to play in the lottery. Tommasina sees in this finding of three numbers an act of Providence, a suggestion that cannot be neglected. She will stake her last soldo on these numbers; and as she is a kind soul, she will tell her friends that they may share her luck.

"Tommasina then took a clean towel from the kitchen to carry home her purchases, since the wicker basket was now bottomless."

On the landing she chanced upon their next-door neighbour, the owner of the *palazzo,* Donna Luisa Iaquinangelo, who, attended by her maid-servant Concetella, was buying tomatoes from a street vendor.

Tommasina stops and bargains for some tomatoes. If the man will let her have them for one soldo less than his price she will give him a good *terno.*

"On hearing these words the man lifted his head, Concetella rose to her feet, and Donna Luisa put forth her goat-like chin in her eagerness to hear more.

"'Has a friar given it to you?' asked she.

"'Maybe it's her confessor,' suggested Concetella.

"'A pretty woman is sure to find someone who'll give her the good numbers,' cackled the man.

"'Never mind who gave them to me, whether

friar or confessor. If you want to take this chance for a fortune, you must play three, forty-two, and eighty-four. These numbers cannot fail to come out, and the Government will catch it.'"

Types of Neapolitan girls.

At the foot of the stairs Tommasina meets Gelsomina, the daughter of the doorkeeper, and Mariangela, the maid of Countess Calamata, who lives on the first floor. It is a familiar scene, the gossipping of these three girls in the doorway. Mariangela, the maid-servant, as pert and shrewd as one of Goldoni's *servette,* devoted to her mistress, whose secrets she freely discusses; slipshod Gelsomina, with dark complexion hidden under rice-powder, with faded rose-coloured gown, and black hair elaborately dressed, is the typical Neapolitan girl.

Their free-spoken gossip.

In no other country and in no other social condition, could this familiar gossip proceed with such an absence of all distinction between that which is fit to be said and that which is not: so free from cant or even of principle, yet so naturally kind, so really honest in its obedience to that unspoken code, which associates wrong-doing with misfortune. Thus Mariangela pities her mistress for having a lover, and Gelsomina would rather hold to her impulsive attachment for penniless Federigo, than entice a richer man. They desire riches because money would mean honesty. Tommasina suggests trying her *terno.*

Gelsomina's young man, Federigo, now makes his appearance. His frizzled hair, red necktie, and short black frock-coat, are to be met with in all the poorer streets of Naples. He condescends to have his shoes blackened by bowlegged Zi' Domenico, who stands waiting for customers. Federigo darts on Gelsomina such fascinating glances that she presently comes up to him, though she pretends to be busy with her crotchet needle. The *terno* given by Tommasina being mentioned, Zi' Domenico is entirely opposed to it.

Federigo a true Neapolitan type.

"'Because, look here, the friar in Santa Maria la Nova has been speaking of mice, the church and cloister are swarming with mice, so there can be no doubt that eleven, which means mice, must come out; then, according to my reckoning, the sixty-nine is rather good, and the eighteen of last week will probably swell into nineteen.'"

Even when the lovers are gone the bowlegged shoeblack continues to discuss this unlikely *terno* with his customers. Thus the *terno* goes round, and we are introduced to several popular types; they appear for a moment and disappear; but the sketch has been so clever that this gallery of portraits gives an impression of life.

"By a quarter to five Carminiello, the eight-year-old stable-boy of Marchesa Casamarte, started off in haste towards the Madonna dell 'Aiuto, his wooden shoes clattering on the flags as he ran. Soon he returned, and, stand-

ing on the corner of the *piazza* with head erect, in the stillness he cried out:

Tommasina's terno wins.

"'Numbers that have come out: Twelve, three, ninety, forty-two, eighty-four!'

"All the houses, shops, and flats in the *piazza* burst into sudden life. All the windows open, all the shopkeepers step out from their doors, all the doorkeepers in their petticoats, white cotton *camisoles* and slippers look out inquisitively, their fists on their hips, their eyes wide open.

"A deep hush followed, broken only by a gruff voice, asking:

"'Carminiè, how did the ninety come out?'

"'Third,' answered the boy; and having done his duty as a town crier, he scampered off to scrub and scour the Marchesa's coaches.

"During the momentous hush that followed his exit, the French lady was seen turning the corner of Via Donnalbina and advancing wearily, with her daughter Caterina leaning on her arm. Both looked fagged: the lady with having trudged about to give those lessons which exhausted her fast-failing health, the girl with having been shut so many hours in the schoolroom."

The persons who have played the *terno* come up to the French woman's quiet rooms. They bring thanks, congratulations, little presents for Tommasina, who has not come home, and everyone is delighted with the great winnings. Tom-

masina's loutish husband comes to say that his wife has been taken ill in the street, and that she is now lying at the hospital with her new-born babe. He is very angry with her for having only staked three soldi on the *terno*. "'A woman is but a woman,' adds he; 'if she had told me . . . . we might be rich by this time.'

"At last the two ladies were left alone. They had no money, no servant, and it seemed likely that they would be turned out of their rooms by the newly rich landlady. Caterina pondered over all these things, whilst her mother sat, with folded hands and half-shut eyes, pretending to sleep.

"'Mother! Mother!' said the girl, taking a seat at her feet.

"'What is it, Piccina?'

"'Tell me!'

"'What?'

"'Have you really forgotten to play that ticket?'

"'Forgotten,' was the muttered answer.

"'Mother, you never told a lie. Have you forgotten, or had you no money left?'

"'I had no money!'

"'You had not . . . . Yet you gave me a franc for my pencils!'

"No answer comes from the distressed mother, who sits in her armchair and strokes her daugh-

ter's head as it lies on her motherly lap, its last refuge!"

Someone has said that in his first books an author gives the strongest note of his individuality, and that later in his career he allows the surrounding atmosphere to influence him; whilst a woman, hesitating and embarrassed in her first literary efforts, gladly accepts guidance, follows the passing fashion. Gradually gaining confidence, she throws off her borrowed plumes and appears what she is. Certainly before Matilde Serao discovered her own talent, she submitted to various influences, especially to Zola's.

Serao and Zola compared.

Matilde Serao is less crude than Zola. She paints low life, and sometimes presents objectionable characters, but there is a certain delicacy which restrains grossness of expression. When she introduces a fallen woman, she generally manages to inspire such pity for her misfortune, as to soften our disgust with the character. Zola's heroines are animals with some human sentiment; Serao's are humans with some animal instincts.

Her morality typically Neapolitan.

Her morality is typical; it is characteristically Neapolitan. In Naples, at every street corner, candles burn before a sacred image; every evening groups of women stand before it singing hymns, and the churches are crowded on Sundays and holydays; vows are made and performed; children wear the Franciscan tunic, and

women display the colours of the Madonna. Yet no people are less Christian. Paganism is rife among these worshippers of hundreds of saints. Who can call Christians these worshippers of the two hundred and fifty different appellations of the Virgin, and those who trade in numberless relics! Or those old women of the Molo, who, pretending to be the direct descendants of San Gennaro, crowd round his altar, and shrilly cry out the *Credo,* scolding the saint, calling him "green face," "old fool," and worse, if the miracle of the liqefying of his blood is delayed!

Neapolitan paganism.

Between this ignorant fanaticism and Matilde Serao's conception of morality and religion, there is the difference that separates her superior mind from their untaught brutality; yet, in the mildness of her reprobation, in her comprehension of the comfort such practices can bring to the sufferers, there is a sympathetic echo.

Serao's sympathy with Neapolitan superstition.

"We all of us believe in the evil eye," she says, and then tells us how, "to get a husband, a girl must fulfil a *novena* to San Giovanni. For nine nights, when midnight is striking, she must stand on her balcony and repeat certain antiphons. If courage does not fail her, on the ninth night she will see a bridge of fire shoot across the sky bearing Salomè, dancing. The first voice she hears after this vision will pronounce her future husband's name." On the same page is told how San Pasquale (another protector of a girl in

search of a husband) will be mollified by the repetition of a doggerel supplication, somewhat like this: "O, blessed San Pasquale, send me a husband, rosy, fair, and chubby—just like you, San Pasquale!" San Pantaleone, if entreated according to the rules, at midnight, in a lonely room, with door and windows open, will condescend to indicate by taps the number you should play at the lotto.

Prevalence of witchcraft and exorcisms.

Witchcraft, too, is practised in Naples, and Matilde Serao guides us into the dens wherein are sold the knotted tapes which, sewn inside the lining of a faithless husband's jacket, will bring him back to his lawful spouse; wherein are cooked the poisonous herbs which, set in a little porringer at a traitor's door, will cause his death; wherein the tongue of the adverse barrister in a lawsuit will be tied by a powerful exorcism. Happily she does not tell us what other misdeeds are accomplished in those dens!

The Neapolitans must be in direct communion with the object of their worship. An abstract idea is nothing to them; they must have a tangible Divinity, a protector that they can invoke, scold, or kiss, according to his condescension and their moods.

"Il Paese di Gesù" illustrates Neapolitan religiousness.

Il Paese di Gesù (The Land of Jesus) is the most imbued with this spirit. As a book of travels it is inferior to others, but as an illustration of Southern religiousness it is interesting

"I lay this book at the feet of the crucifix, and I stretch forth my hands towards it, for me, for my children, as I whisper for me, for my children, the words of the first Christians: *'Ave spes unica.'"*

False note in "Il Paese di Gesù."

The insinuation of a critic that Signora Scarfoglio never went to Palestine, may account for the haziness of her descriptions, but her Southern temperament is responsible for the false intonation of this would-be religious book.

Serao most successful in short-story writing.

If Matilde Serao has been considered rather as the author of short stories than as a romance writer, it is because, even when the plot of a novel binds together a series of these sketches, as we have seen in *Riccardo Joanna* or in the *Paese di Cuccagna,* yet are they still short stories. Two of her novels, however, present a development and a continuity outside this classification.

"La Ballerina" is an exception.

La Ballerina (The Ballet-Girl) is the delicate analysis of the passion of a poor girl for a young nobleman whom she worships from afar. Such is the fascination unconsciously exerted by this fashionable sceptic that, imagining that he thinks her innocence is silly, she accepts a lover who soon abandons her, whilst her idol never suspects the havoc he has made. She sinks lower and lower. But in a moment the scene changes. Trezi is dead! has committed suicide to escape the consequences of his irregular life. His body

is there, abandoned by all, in a miserable, fever-filled room of a cheap lodging-house! Carmela hears of it. At once the doll disappears, the woman appears. Instantly she goes to weep over that dead body—her dead. The right which she claims, the joy she finds in kissing those cold lips, which in life had for her only cruel, mocking words, this joy has paid her for all her broken and miserable life. She knows that for her sins she is eternally damned, but with such power of love she regrets nothing.

Serao's conception of woman's nature.

This blind passion, enchaining the will, destroying all power of judgment, is Matilde Serao's conception of the nature of woman—at least, of Italian women. The object of that passion may be a man, as in this novel of the ballet-dancer; it may be her Church, as in *Suor Giovanna della Croce*. But in each instance the blind intensity is the same.

"Suor Giovanna della Croce" her best novel.

This, her latest and best novel, is the picture of a little world and an evocation of souls. To many of us the cowled figure of a friar, the veiled face of a nun, conceal lives more remote than the time-worn stones of monuments. Though they stand there, in the broad daylight, living and breathing as we do, their thoughts, their feelings, their very souls belong to other times; and this remoteness, this mystery, lend attraction to their dim personality. Matilde Serao has shown dis-

crimination in selecting this subject and power in rendering its poetic possibilities.

Description of a suppressed convent.

With her we enter the Convent of the *Sepolte Vive* (the Buried Alive). And we are so subjugated by the evocation of this strange world that we share in the terrors of the nuns, who have just been warned that their house is one of the suppressed convents, and that in two days they must leave. They have grown old, these poor women, in this shelter; long ago they broke every tie binding them to the world; yet, stronger than any anxiety for their future, is their bewilderment before this violation of vows. It is the end of all that they have held dearer than life, it is a plunge into the abyss which they had not dared to face even in youth. The world with all its evils and sins is awaiting them! They are already damned!

Departure of the nuns.

For the last time they wander through the loved cloisters, they bid a trembling farewell to the dark cells, their puny minds cling to this round of small duties and little joys, they are filled with dim terrors. We sympathize with them and share their distress when the portress rushes up to the Mother Abbess, crying out that the *clausura* has been violated and that "they" are coming. "They," the enemy, is a polite officer, who performs his duty with the utmost consideration. His orders are to discover the identity of the nuns and know their names.

Worse still, he must lift the veils that have never been removed from their faces! The nuns flock round their Abbess for protection and encouragement in this hour of shame and misery.

The sad procession of the nuns leaving the convent is well told: one by one they depart, alone or attended by some forgotten relative who has come to fetch them. The Abbess, standing at the door, blesses each trembling, bewildered old woman, as they precede her out of the beloved refuge.

Novel tells story of Suor Giovanna.

The novel tells the story of Suor Giovanna, accompanies her in the hard, dreary life that now begins. She finds a home with her cousins, and is shown consideration as long as there is a prospect of her recovering the dot she had brought with her to the convent, and she is tolerated as long as she enjoys the small pension provided by the State; but when that is gone she is sent away, after being fleeced.

These pictures lifelike and heartfelt.

These pictures are as lifelike, as closely observed, as in Serao's other works. But here there is added a vital throb, a genuine emotion. Suor Giovanna drops lower and lower, she shares the misery of the poor, the humiliations of the wicked. She, the pure virgin, becomes the servant of a light woman! She, who would never have unveiled her face, seeks a night shelter in a degraded lodging-house, and witnesses a police inspection of this den! On being asked her name

by the police, she gives her old family name, which she had dropped long ago, "as she will not defile her religious surname by pronouncing it in such a place." Lastly we see Suor Giovanna at a charity dinner given by fashionable women to the poorest of the poor. Humbly she sits at this mendicant's table and hungrily eats; and humbly, to the fine lady who asks it, she tells her name, her undefiled religious name.

Suor Giovanna keeps her religious name undefiled.

In this, last in date and first in merit, of Matilde Serao's works, we possess the sum of her qualities.

FEDERIGO DE ROBERTO

FEDERIGO DE ROBERTO

De Roberto compared with Serao and Verga.

WHY are some books successful while others equally good meet with scant welcome? De Roberto is the equal of Verga in accurate observation and intense feeling. He has done for Sicily what Madame Serao has accomplished for Naples. He is Serao's superior in profound analysis of the human heart; he writes better Italian. Yet, while Serao's volumes are translated as soon as published, none of De Roberto's have been thus honoured.

De Roberto is essentially a Southron. A native of Naples, he lives in Sicily, and took his university degree in Catania.

He first appeared before the public as a critic in the *Fanfulla della Domenica,* though he only gave his full measure in his novels.

His originality and scientific accuracy.

Born a romanticist, De Roberto's education made him a positivist; conciliating these two elements, he strikes a personal and original note. Had he lived half a century earlier his imagination would have blossomed in romantic novels; but, imbued with the theory of evolution, and meditating on hereditary tendencies and the predestined characters of individuals, he has sought to discover the general laws underlying a multitude of facts, often apparently unrelated.

Problem propounded in "L'Albero della Scienza."

In the Preface of his volume, *L'Albero della Scienza* (The Tree of Knowledge), he thus presents this problem: "The following sketches have been composed in observance with that artistic method which allows the greatest preponderance to the inner world of the soul, studies its alternate phases, investigates its phenomena, and unveils its actions and reactions. This method is evidently only applicable to a limited class of subjects. Since, where it is neither possible to peer inside the brains of other people, or to ascertain by any means what may be happening therein, the psychological investigator is reduced to imagining what he himself would feel were he in the situation he invents for his personages.

Author must sympathize with his characters.

"It is accordingly only too evident that, if he has to stand in their shoes, they must be created to his own resemblance, and that the events in which they have a part must be familiar to him. In other words, it is impossible for anyone to analyze a situation or a character unless he can sympathize with it; hence every distasteful, gross, vulgar circumstance or personage must be discarded. Yet, as such do exist, and art is called to represent them, it has to be done by following another and wholly different method."

Of this other method, applicable to subjects and characters that disagree with the author's personality—of a purely objective method—De

Roberto gives us the formula in the Preface of another volume of short stories bearing the title *Processi Verbali.*

Objective method exhibited in "Processi Verbali."

"These short stories are the literal and impersonal transcription of instantaneous views of little comedies and tragedies of real life. Impersonality, if accepted as an artistic dogma, appears wholly inconsistent with narrative or description. Absolute impersonality can only be obtained in dialogues. Events are expected to develop by themselves, personages to unfold their own characters, and reveal by their sayings and doings who and what they are.

"The rôle of a writer who aims at suppressing his personal interference, is therefore limited to the production of the explanations strictly required for the understanding of facts, and to a transcription of the words uttered by the personages—something like the stage directions used by playwrights. Every subject bears in itself its own form of art, and, *vice versa,* each form of art is suitable to a certain class of subjects. The delicate task for the artist is to discern in each special case the practical application of this intrinsic, absolute, infrangible law of fitness."

Objective and subjective psychology.

This double formula of an objective and a subjective psychology being thus clearly enunciated by De Roberto the critic, De Roberto the novelist has applied it rigidly. All of which proves that he is less an artist than a thinker. De Ro-

A literary vivisectionist.

berto has for reality the same craving which other artists have for beauty. He attempts the most difficult investigation merely to satisfy his desire for accurate literary vivisection.

In his first sketches what pains he takes to train his eye and ear and mind, to this unflinching method; how earnestly he grasps each particular shade of expression, each characteristic trait in each figure. Sometimes he analyzes fluctuations of thoughts untranslatable into actions, sometimes he sets aside altogether his personality, and strives to give a clear and exact rendering of that which he has observed.

Other story-tellers are limited in their choice of subjects by some inveterate preference, or restrained in their representations by their favourite method of appreciation, or confined by the observance of an artistic credo to some fixed literary form; but for an eclectic writer, who has willingly surrendered his right of selection and his preference; who, mirror-like, reflects whatever passes within range, the field of observation is unlimited, and the possibility of rendering unbounded.

"Saved," a story of "The Tree of Knowledge."

There is a little sketch, *Saved,* in De Roberto's earliest volume, *The Tree of Knowledge,* which illustrates this subjective method of observation. The writer has transfused his own personality into that of his hero.

Alberto Gismondi is thus introduced: "Re-

clining in an easy chair, with his back to the window, and his legs stretched out, Alberto Gismondi pretended to read his newspaper. . . . . From behind this rampart Alberto kept looking towards the half-opened door, and listened to detect some noise, or to see someone. When he had remained for some time in that expectant attitude, he would rouse himself and take up his newspaper and pretend to be engrossed in his reading."

Illustrates De Roberto's subjective method.

A light footfall, a rustling of silks, and the expected person—his wife—stands on the threshold. She says that she is going visiting, and that she will be at Lucia Marignano's house by four o'clock; she adds, with a little sneer, that she expects to meet him there.

Alberto longs to stop her, but allows her to leave without saying a word. He returns to his chair in sullen misery and dejection. As he stares vacantly at the carpet under his feet, he can almost see his wife as she steps into her brougham and is driven from one house to another, and finally arrives at Lucia Marignano's, her quondam best friend, now her preferred rival. Alberto dislikes to see his wife on friendly terms with his mistress, and still more he hates to see her the object of Ferace's attention. Ferace is sure to be there, he will certainly sit by her . . . . whisper to her . . . .

Jealousy brings love to life.

Jealousy lashes Alberto's slumbering affection.

Marriage kills love.

"They had been passionately fond of each other; but what love can outlive years of daily intercourse and intimacy? Esteem, mutual regard, common interest—all these, indeed, might be sufficient to insure peace, but that first gushing passion, that childish love, had come to an end, because it was thus fatally doomed to perish. He had not been faithful to his wife; but what of that? The wrong was not irredeemable, and certainly not such as to give her the right of retaliation. At first she took it tragically, supplicating him not to drive her to despair. He had made light of her stagey bathos, and affected to consider her growing coldness as a fit of sulks. Then he had grown impatient, and had answered with sneers. There he had made a mistake! Since then she had ceased entreating him, and had taken to plotting . . . . no! plotting was not the word; she had always acted openly."

Can impending catastrophe be avoided?

As he thus recalls the facts they assume a new significance. He remembers how, when Ferace had begun to pay attention to his wife, he had affected indifference, though he had winced with jealousy. But now matters had reached a climax. Could anything be done to avert the impending catastrophe? They had loved each other, and how happy they were; he longs to again love, and to be again beloved. Ah! he has read somewhere that feelings may be evoked in one's heart at will! Yes, here is

the volume which contained a solution to the problem! "If you can frame your features so as to express anger or cheerfulness, for the mere fact of having thus bent your facial muscles a beginning of these feelings will grow upon you."

We are what we wish to be.

This idea exactly fits Alberto's case. He realizes that his greatest difficulty is not to obtain his wife's love, but to love her. But life's happiness is at stake, and this cure is worth trying. Consequently he speaks, smiles, laughs—looks as he would do were he passionately in love. Not merely pretending before his wife, but all the time for his own benefit. A week later peace reigns in the little household, and love is in both their hearts.

De Roberto discovers causes from effects.

The bond uniting a feeling with its expression is well known to De Roberto, but, unlike his romantic brethren, he first studies the outer expression and then the inner motive which has prompted it. An idealist like Manzoni will first imagine a frame of mind, then strive to give it a sensible appearance. Having settled that his hero or heroine must be thinking or feeling in a given manner, he will invent what he or she has said and done; whilst De Roberto, impressed by a look, a word, strives to trace them up to a cause. By this careful observation of a multitude of apparently trivial facts, he has arrived at the comprehending of the most different souls and interpreting the most hidden motives.

"Processi Verbali" is both catholic and original.

Processi Verbali is a volume revealing this power of comprehension of the most different subjects, and of treating them with originality. Thus, the scene in which three rude louts claim a reparation from the seducer of their sister's "honour," after having peacefully acquiesced in the fact for many years; or, the other, in which an elderly laundress laments her daughter's stupidity in marrying a workman rather than accepting a wealthy protector, contrast with the stolidity and piety of the mother who will not forgive her dying daughter, and mumbles her *paternosters* and *aves* with comical interludes of housekeeping preoccupations.

Is De Roberto immoral?

De Roberto has been charged with immorality, yet he has a law by which he measures the acts of men. He believes every society has a moral standard sufficient for each individual in it. Though high principles and elevated questions may be seldom discussed, De Roberto never throws a glamour over wrong or makes wickedness beautiful. His pitiless descriptions of the consequences attending on wrong-doing are not an encouragement to vice, even though he presents no high motives for virtue. To a society so eager for the immediate satisfaction of its passions, so scornful of abstract morality as is the present generation in Italy, this matter-of-fact exposition of the advantages of virtue is an effective lesson.

This general law of the harmony between individual duty and social utility is emphasized in De Roberto's great *Vicerè* (The Viceroys). In this vast picture of Sicilian life there is patient observation, accurate historical data, and penetrating analysis of character. This book also throws light on the customs of the South, answers many random charges brought against Sicilians, and when the charge is true, presents the extenuating circumstance. *"Vicerè" his greatest novel.*

The Uzeda family of nobles have been nicknamed "The Viceroys," because some of their ancestors have exerted semi-regal authority under the Spanish dominion, and because they still domineer over their fellow-countrymen. That the exercise of any particular faculty of the mind or of the body insures its survival and its adaptability is the idea which gives unity to an extraordinary number of events and a cloud of personages. The Uzedas have ruled because they were strong; they are strong because they have ruled. Their vices, their virtues, have developed according to the laws of evolution, and represent the survival of the fittest.

The protagonist of the novel is the family, and not an individual. The life and death of individuals are but incidents in the evolution of the family, and the family itself is studied as part of a society. *Depicts the evolution of a family.*

The novel opens with the death of Donna

Character of the dowager princess. Teresa Uzeda e Resà, Princess of Francalanza, the imperious Dowager who has commanded two generations. With the spirit of feudalism surviving, she has bent all the members of her household toward one aim: the conquest of power and wealth. Yet her avarice was not sordid, and is so untiring and so successful that the pageant around the coffin is almost royal in its magnificence. It is not an ordinary funeral of an ordinary person; it is the end of a world, the end of that feudal principle which had hitherto blinded the multitude to the faults and weaknesses of their masters, and these masters to the consequences of their acts.

She rules her family. Of her husband, a weak-minded fool, she had made her docile instrument. Even before the birth of her own children she had prepared the way for them, and since their birth she had plotted for their advancement. Duke Gaspare and Don Eugenio, her husband's brothers, she had sent to seek their fortunes over-seas; Don Blasco and Donna Chiara she had persuaded to enter convents, and Donna Ferdinanda she had condemned to single blessedness. So too, she had disposed of her own children.

Compelled in her old age to accept the new social order, she manages that her own people, the Uzeda, keep their supremacy by serving it.

Don Blasco, her brother (an unwilling monk), is ill-mannered, foul-mouthed, gross, gluttonous,

grumbling, swearing, yet so attached to the family that this faithfulness becomes his redeeming trait. The violent man, shut out from the activity of life, lives for lust and good eating. Some scenes of convent life become the background to this figure. "At noontime they would all gather in the great hall, with its twenty-four windows, as large as doors, pouring in daylight on the frescoed walls. Then, after the *Benedicite,* the reader for the week began his recital of the Rule with the first forkful of maccaroni. Thus, whilst the meats go round and the flagons are emptied, amidst the rattling of forks and knives, the quivering of glasses, and the jostling of plates, the Benedictine Rule is droned out by the reader's voice." *Character of Don Blasco, the monk.*

After dinner each Father retires to drink a supplementary flagon in his private rooms, or to a round of gossip with the neighbours, concluding with the daily visit to the "house," wherein a husband feels grateful and honoured by the protection bestowed on his wife by "Sua Paternità." No disturbing echo or remembrance of the unheeded Rule troubles their conscience. After supper, cards and dice to close these saintly days. *Convent licentiousness.*

Don Blasco is the blackest sheep of all this black flock because, besides his gross instincts, there is always latent in him the bitter sting of being an Uzeda and not at the head of the

convent. He dies of indigestion in the house of his mistress.

Donna Teresa's sons and daughters.

The sons and daughters of Donna Teresa form the central group in the picture. When first introduced they are quarrelling over their mother's will. The dowager has not wronged her eldest son, the Prince, because that would have been contrary to her feudal principles, but she has favoured her third son, Count Raimondo. Lodovico had been previously forced to enter the convent where his uncle, Don Blasco, lives. Clever and ambitious, Lodovico makes this enforced vocation a footstep to power and dignity within the Church. The subtle diplomacy and acute perception of this Uzeda is cleverly delineated, in contrast with the violence of the others. It is another phase of the Uzeda power.

Ferdinando, the fourth son, is weak-minded, and, having been beguiled by his mother into accepting a bit of bare land for his inheritance, must, perforce, rest satisfied with it. Donna Chiara and Donna Lucrezia, the two daughters, are strongly delineated character studies: both passionate and obdurate, both morally deformed by their surroundings, and by that incipient insanity common to all the family.

The marriage of Donna Lucrezia with the man she had worshipped when her love was opposed, and whom she despises after he has become her husband, and her final return to him, when he

has acted Petruccio to this noble-born shrew, would form a novel by itself.

Prince and Raimondo the two important characters.

But the Prince and Count Raimondo are the two important personages because, between them, they sum up the hereditary instincts of their race. Raimondo is irreclaimable; he has that hopeless wickedness which ripens in weak characters striving to assert themselves, yet conscious that they are merely the toys of circumstances. A gambler, he is entrapped by his brother into a renouncement of the largest part of his fortune in exchange for a little ready money. He does not discard his mistress because she pricks his pride into forcing the law and the Church to legitimatize their union.

The strong Prince and weak Count.

If Raimondo has the reckless gallantry of his ancestors, his eldest brother, the Prince, has their steadiness of purpose. Such men are born to be hated and obeyed. How he plots and contrives to swell his own portion and curtail everybody else; how he rules his children and kindred; how he fleeces his brothers and sisters; and how he commits even darker crimes: the forgery of Don Blasco's will, and poisoning his wife—all this is told with imagination and truth. But De Roberto penetrates deeper than the facts, beyond the appearances. He shows the underlying misery of the tyrant who cannot subdue his own passionate soul, who cannot command his son's affection or respect; and who, though he has

achieved success, is thwarted in his fondest hope. Broken by disease, distracted with pain, cursing, blaspheming, his death-bed affords no other comfort than the terror of purgatory and the hatred of his son.

Prince's daughter Teresa the saint.

Teresa, his daughter, is the saint of the family; her purity and faith blossom as the white water-lily out of all this family foulness. Earnest and enduring like all her race, with the same exaltation, it is all turned towards holiness and self-sacrifice. She strives to subdue her own flesh, her own aspirations, with the same eagerness that her fathers have shown in the conquering of others.

When realistic writers attempt the delineation of a pure and virtuous woman they often conventionally idealize the type which their pessimism fails to understand. Their heroines glide between heaven and earth, too beautiful and too ethereal to interest our frail humanity. Such are the heroines of Balzac's *Lys dans la Vallée* and Zola's *Rêve*. But we can sympathize with Teresa. We have met her in real life and admired her. Her altruism, her purity, her fulfilment of the daily round of duty, even her weakness, are those of a real personality, and they teach their moral clearly. For, at the last, has she not conquered a larger share of prosperity, peace, and glory than all her plotting, miserly, ambitious relatives?

Is not idealized.

In Consalvo, her brother, the final blossom of the ancient trunk, the heir to the hoarded wealth and accumulated energies of this race of rulers, the author has typified a whole generation of men.

Consalvo, the powerful, is a type.

His education in the convent, where his great-uncle, Don Blasco, had lived in sloth, and his uncle, Don Lodovico, in plotting, is an historic reconstruction. Within the cloister walls of this college, originally designed to cramp bodies and minds in obscurantism, a breeze of free thought has blown seeds that grow. Boys have heard of Garibaldi's landing at Marsala, are eager to join him, and plan to escape. Consalvo reveals the plot, and is well beaten by his comrades. A few days later he sees the red-shirted soldiers encamped in the convent. Consalvo becomes a leader by being only a little in advance of the crowd. He travels, studies both men and books, and when he returns to his native town he is armed for that modern form of warfare—politics. The election speech he delivers in the convent of San Benedetto (now turned into a public school) is an ample program of liberal reform.

Thus the Uzeda race triumphs again when this scion is elected to Parliament and becomes powerful because he has discovered the modern formula to success: the subordination of his own personal interest to the interest of the whole social group around him.

Uzeda race again triumphant.

"Vicerè" a valuable study of Sicily.

No synopsis can do justice to this volume of six hundred pages. It is crammed with episodes, crowded with personages. To the student of local customs, to the investigator, this patient analysis of the biological laws, physiological influences, and social events that have, in less than a century, transformed Sicily, will prove both instructive and interesting.

De Roberto possesses best qualities of Verga and Zola.

Critics sometimes deny De Roberto's originality, and in comparison cite Zola's social novels, Verga's *Malavoglia*. Zola is a greater artist, and Verga has a greater imagination; but if De Roberto has each of these qualities in a lesser degree, he has them both together. He has more solid learning, a wider acquaintance with general scientific laws than Zola, yet, at the same time, he is delightfully unconventional and unsophisticated. He discovers the world as if for the first time, and the most hackneyed topics assume a new aspect in his sight, a new appearance in his representations. Consider that tritest of subjects: patriotism. Everything that could be said and sung about Garibaldi's heroic campaign in Sicily has been said in praise of the captain who conquered the beautiful realm, only to offer it as a present to a king; yet De Roberto considers this theme from a different standpoint, shows the grand epopee across the minds of its most obdurate antagonists (the monks), notes how they were carried along by the tide of public

opinion, how they passed from ranting expostulation to submission, and finally to approval, and the old story sounds like a new one, none the less poetic for being so true.

Some figures of public men, in this and in other novels, are sketched with vigour and sincerity, detecting in each the proportion of genuine feeling and acquired cleverness, the dose of cunning and the real heart impulse which stamps them for real men, and not *the* hero or *the* rascal.

Duke Gaspare Uzeda is not always a traitor, though he sides with the stronger party, and Benedetto Giulente is really clever, though he misses his opportunities. Arconati, in the novel *Illusione,* is a complete character, showing a member of Parliament in the exercise of his functions, and giving a good idea of the working of this complex, modern mechanism in Italy.

"Illusione" a continuation of "Vicerè."

This novel *Illusione* is, in a sense, a continuation of the *Vicerè,* since the principal character in it is Teresa Uzeda, daughter to Count Raimondo; but it differs in spirit. It is a study of one character, around which the other figures are grouped merely as subservient elements.

The first part of the book, telling of Teresa's education, is the best. She is entrusted to her aunt Carlotta, who, living in Palermo, never having had children of her own, lacks all experience in the matter, and follows blindly the bad examples around her. The scanty teaching of

Teresa's injudicious education. the schoolroom is completed by a finishing professor, and though she is taught nothing else, she can write in a flowery style, and her ill-guided phantasy is provided with literary wings. Musical talent, too, is cultivated; not, of course, any daily drumming of scales, but the desultory reading of operas and the singing of all the love-sick *romanze* she can get. Night after night she sits in her aunt's opera-box, and feeds her fancy with the adventures of the prima donna and the love-lorn quavers of the *tenorino*. The eleven-year-old *signorina* drives daily to the *Passeggiata,* straining her ears to catch all the gossip, her eyes to see the unwholesome sights, and her mind to understand the scandals buzzing around her.

Its result. At the age when other girls are romping in frock and pinafore she dreams of a lover. No wonder if, after such an education, Teresa falls in love with the first young fellow who pays her attention; but she is persuaded to accept a noble-born rascal, whom she loves passionately for a time, because she must always be in love with someone.

There ends the first part of the book. The second is a series of love affairs, into each of which Teresa rushes headlong, always breaking off in disgust as she sees the vanity of her illusion. "Running after the rainbow" might be the translation of the title; but then it would be well to understand that what she takes for a

rainbow is only a will-o'-the-wisp dancing over the dead waters of luxury. Onward she runs, tearing a bit of her heart at every step, falling lower and lower still, until, grey-haired and weary with herself and the world, she retires to her country-seat, where, after the death of her devoted servant Stefana, she is left in loneliness. *Teresa's desolate old age.*

The last scene in this book is eloquently simple. Teresa, fumbling among the few things left by this old servant, acknowledges that, with all her advantages of birth, beauty, and wealth, she has only inspired one strong and constant affection, she has been faithfully beloved by only one person—Stefana.

This able and conscientious study, though it bears evidence of careful preparation, is unsatisfactory. The heroine is never interesting. Manon Lescaut and Emma Bovary have fallen lower still, and yet have awakened our pity, either because in their genuine love we found an extenuating circumstance for their wickedness, or because they paid for it so heavy a price. Teresa is rather shown as a pathological case, and she only endures the logical consequences of her acts; this may be enough for truth, but it is hardly sufficient for an artistic representation of truth. *Teresa an unsatisfactory character study.*

The study of De Roberto as an essayist and literary critic is outside the scope of this book.

His industry and his assimilation of the predominating ideas, indicate De Roberto as a representative man of the moment. His lack of originality is repaid by his comprehension.

NEERA (ANNA RADIUS-ZUCCARI)

NEERA (ANNA RADIUS-ZUCCARI)

"I AM nine years old and very plain; mother always scolds me." The little girl who traces these words on a window-pane has not given way to childish sulks, but is burdened with a sorrow beyond her years, and which she cannot even comprehend. *First glimpse of little Anna Neera.*

It is our first glimpse of pale-faced, dark-eyed Anna Neera. The love which her heart craved to give and to receive, as a flower craves to receive sunlight and to give out perfume, found its satisfaction in her father's affection and in her worship of him. When business took father and daughter from the southern sunshine to the dull atmosphere and colourless life of a Lombard village, the kingdom of books afforded Anna a refuge from uncongenial reality, and her first favourite was Sterne's *Sentimental Journey,* of which she writes: *Influence of Sterne's "Sentimental Journey."*

"I penetrated into that profound investigation of the human heart. . . . . Not content to listen and observe, I wished to share the hero's feelings, to be happy or unhappy with him."

Schopenhauer somewhere observes that women, by reason of the very narrowness of their vision, accurately observe that which they actually see, but are disqualified for correct generali-

zations. This is true of Neera, and she knows it. Wisely avoiding subjects with which she would be less acquainted, her talent is devoted to the study of women. Especially sympathetic and accurate are her studies of unmarried women.

Her studies of unmarried women.

"Their misery," she says, "being personal and relative, is swallowed up in the vast ocean of human misery; it is overlooked, as toothache is overlooked by people in possession of sound teeth. If man is to enjoy the lion's share of happiness, let him at least show generosity. Whenever his flesh cries out he can silence it, as Dante silenced the three-headed monster—with a handful of mud; and from this satiety of filth he may rise again to vague cravings for ideality. But the male creature divides women into two categories, saying to one, 'You shall satisfy my flesh'; saying to the other, 'You shall be the sunbeam of my soul.' Nature scorns such divisions. Through centuries the cry of the courtesan who, in an ecstasy of divine love, sank at her Saviour's feet, is still ringing in our ears. We can still feel for her and pity her; we understand her agony and partake in her passion; why can we not hearken to the cry of those women who, thirsting for an ideal love, weep over the fetters that bind their flesh?"

The social standing of women in the Italian middle and lower classes twenty years ago was sad indeed. A girl's education made her an ac-

complished toy for man's pleasure or a servant to his wants, and no more. A short period of passionate love-making and of degrading jealousy was the usual interlude between the dullness of a cloistered girlhood and the weariness of unappreciated child-bearing and house drudgery. But with the newer conception of the dignity of humanity for man and woman alike that has dawned over the land, much has been accomplished by women and for women. They now actively participate in the economic struggle for existence. Bread-winners compel respect in our modern society whether they be men or women, and political rights may soon be demanded and granted to these toilers.

Social evolution of Italian women.

Neera has noted this social evolution. But she has also noted that the happiness of woman has not increased proportionately with her enlarged responsibilities, and she has tried to discover the reason and show it to us. Bodies stunted by ceaseless toil and inadequate food; minds cramped by loneliness and uncongenial surroundings, or embittered by wanton opposition; young girls transformed into fashionable puppets or heartless flirts by the frivolities of society; and noble hearts rising heroic through agonies of unspoken grief: all these Neera has described with love and comprehension.

Has not brought increased happiness.

Lydia is the story of a girl, naturally kind and

"Lydia" is a story of degeneration.

upright, who is distorted, perverted, by her environment, and condemned to bitter sorrow.

That small proportion of pleasure-seekers who arrogate to themselves the title "Society" or "*Grande Monde*" are much the same in appearance and aim the world over—the same frivolity, the same banality, the same gowns, the same music, the same dinners and wines and scandal and amusements in London, Paris, Rome, Cairo, and Constantinople. Yet under this apparent conventionalism there are diversities of race and training. The Italian fashionable young lady, apparently so much like her sisters in other countries, yet differs from them. She is not self-reliant like the English miss, who knows exactly how far public opinion will countenance her flirtation; and she does not, like the French *demi-vierge,* reckon on the complicity of her friends, though she may sometimes act as these do.

Social difficulties of Italian girls.

The *signorina,* just emancipated from traditional restraint, is giddy with the blood throbbing in every pulse; she is unprepared for the freedom grudgingly granted her by a society which has not yet outgrown its ancient prejudices; she has no accepted standard of propriety by which to regulate her behaviour, and will at times meet with too much indulgence, and at other times with the rigorism of the past.

Yet the society which is so severe has done

nothing to smooth the way for her, never fenced out the impudent display of that wrong-doing which is generally laughed at in her presence, though it would mean ruin to her worldly prospects if it were attributed to her. She witnesses the manœuvres of gallantry, she knows of the *liaisons* going on around her, for her there are no mysteries; yet she is expected to continue her little flirtations with childish innocence.

This young girl is soon warned by experience and by worldly wise friends, that the Italian marrying man cares little for the allurement of modesty, that even a large *dot* is not omnipotent, and that an old name is a small prerogative in a democratic society; but that not one of the men who swarm round her in the dancing-hall or theatre-box is proof against seduction in its grossest form. Society indicates marriage as the goal, and coquetry as the means.

Lydia's début and worldliness.

Lydia, when she is first introduced to us, is just entering society. As she enters the ball-room without embarrassment, her elderly uncle sighs for the girls "of his time." "She called forth mingled feelings of wonder and pity, as she stood there with her childish face and scarcely rounded figure, and that look of consummate worldliness; or, rather, she might have been wondered at in this way, if all the other girls had not been of much the same pattern; the drawing-room was

like a hothouse filled with artificially forced flowers."

Indelicacy of fashionable Italian society.

The ball-room and the theatre-box soon have no secrets for her, and she is glad to discuss the latest bit of scandal. She is full of an unwholesome curiosity about the very things she should not know. A season in Leghorn, the fashionable seaside resort, gives the finishing touch to her education. The bad manners of a fast set, the grossness more visible here in the unconventional intercourse of sea-bathing, have turned Lydia into an unblushing coquette. She cares for no one in particular, but is content with the society of fast men, young and old, swimming, rowing, smoking cigarettes, exchanging jokes and innuendoes. Two proposals are rejected before she goes into the country.

Lydia is attracted by Calmi.

In Naples, a year later, she meets a superior man, and is attracted by him, but Calmi is a sceptic, and she, too, can be neither sincere nor simple with him.

"'Now, be candid, Calmi; what opinion had you of me?'

"'Had I, or have I?'

"'Past tense.'

"'Bad!'

"'Present?'

"'Worse!'

"It was not the answer Lydia expected. She

pulled a long puff at her cigarette, and said very quietly:

"'I daresay politeness is not included in your travelling traps.'

"'Of course it isn't,' replied the young man, laughing, 'it's too cumbersome for that.'

"Then they were silent for a while.

"Lydia was standing, and looked somewhat taller than usual in her trailing gown of white plush trimmed with swan's-down. The night had an enchanting softness, laden with perfumes, warblings, and violet transparencies of mother-of-pearl.

"'I know,' said Lydia, in a low, saddened voice, 'people are speaking against me . . . . They say that I am giddy, vain, extravagant . . . . goodness knows what else . . . .'

"'Slander, of course . . . .'

"'No, it is not slander!' she exclaimed, impetuously.

"'What then?'

"'Why, it's . . . .'

"The young lawyer looked at her from his clear, cold eyes; now and then he politely turned his head away to puff a wreath of smoke from his manilla.

"'I thought,' exclaimed Lydia, impetuously, 'that you had understood me better!'

"'The trite fancy of women, and their habitual tactics; they assume to be undecipherable re-

Calmi's opinion of women.

buses, and are never tired of aping the ancient courts of love, when he who guessed a riddle would win the hand of the Queen of Beauty. Nowadays rebuses and riddles are confined to the third page of newspapers, and none but door-keepers' daughters or schoolboys ever trouble their heads to guess them for the sake of winning the prize, which is only a bauble from the bargain-counter.'

"'Ah!' said Lydia, bitterly, 'I forgot that women are all alike for you!'

"'In a certain sense, so they are; yet I make a difference between those that deceive and those that are deceived.'

"'Ah! ah!' exclaimed Lydia, throwing away her cigarette, and laughing aloud. 'You have disclosed your battery; of course you prefer the deceivable woman.'

"'I prefer,' said Calmi, unmoved, 'simple women.'

"'In your opinion I am a complex woman.'

"'You are worse; you try to appear one.'

"'I think,' resumed Lydia, archly, 'that I can guess what is a man's ideal of woman. She must be very beautiful, or else she will not be noticed at all; you want her to be strong and cold, to resist the wiles of others, yet tender and loving to hearken to your suit; she is expected to practise self-denial, and let you have all her share

of life's pleasures; she should be brave, patient, and submissive, so as to give you no trouble when you become tired of her; and, as she has had to wait for your leave before she could partake in the feast of life, so she must depend on your whim to be dismissed."

Underneath all this bantering and affected scepticism, Lydia is evidently attracted to this man. "She wonders why Calmi does not kiss that pretty hand of hers as it is lying on the balustrade, so white and shapely." No word is spoken in sincerity and simplicity, yet they are very near understanding each the other. Happiness has passed so near them, but they had no eyes to see it.

Lydia's instincts are noble.

That Lydia possesses the elements that make a good and wise woman is implied in the efforts she makes, after her mother's death, to give a new direction to her own life. One evening her friend, Eva Seymour, is introduced. It is a not uncommon story which Eva has to tell: her father a bankrupt through the crash of a bank, and poverty threatening the petted heiress of Lord Seymour.

"Her generous instinct prompted Lydia to rush immediately to the aid of her unlucky friends, and she heartily proffered her home, her wealth—everything that belonged to her.

"The impulse of charity which had inspired her exertions among the poor rose up again,

strengthened by friendship; she felt that her heart was expanding under a new joy. She kissed Eva, comforted her, laughed with her, so brightened by a new light that she looked like a different Lydia."

Is tortured by pride and passion.

When Eva marries the man she has so long secretly adored, Lydia witnesses her fulness of joy in this consummation of love, and contrasts it with the shallowness of her own life. The sight of these conjugal endearments awaken in her over-excited imagination too precise images of that love which is, despite her denials, her constant desire, and her intimacy with Eva ceases. Though eager to marry, she refuses several proposals, and is tortured alike by her thwarted nature and her proud pretension of indifference.

The gradual abasement of Lydia's character cannot be briefly summarized as the poor girl advances step by step along a path which grows ever more narrow and more gloomy.

Her gradual abasement.

When her nature revolts against this sexless life, she is unchecked by duties, unsupported by hands of affection, and this victim of society becomes a cause of social disturbance.

Affecting to despise public opinion as to the position of unmarried women in society, she is indeed most sensitive to its criticism.

Her early companions have married and deserted her. She associates freely with male

friends, but has no preference—she is only eager "for those effluvia of desire which rise up towards every woman from the crowded streets, the over-filled theatres, and all those places where people throng together, and where men's gaze will caress, desire, implore, surrender wholly in one glance. . . . . She had become proficient in every art of coquetry. When she stepped in her coach she had a sly kick for gathering her skirts in one hand and lifting them smartly above her pretty feet; a glimpse of a cloud of lace, a sort of apotheosis which would cause the passer-by to stop. This was sometimes her only pleasure in all the day."

Her loneliness and eroticism

Calmi comes very near loving her. He guesses that her apparent coldness is but a form of pride; he pities her with a brotherly affection, and would even interfere when he sees her on the verge of ruin. Haunted with the ghost of advancing years and vanishing beauty, distracted by repressed desire, Lydia accepts the unscrupulous Keptsky.

Courted by profligate Keptsky.

Keptsky's love-making is that of a fashionable profligate.

They have been walking in the rain in the outskirts of the town.

"'I am so tired!' said Lydia.

"'Let us rest awhile here.'

"Inside the doorway of a half-built house they find a shelter against the wind and rain.

"Lydia was now leaning against the wall, shivering with cold, whilst her face beamed radiant with the pleasure of being so near him.

"'You are so delicate; I'm afraid you will catch cold.' Lydia shrugged her shoulders, with a pleased smile.

"'Let me rub your feet dry.'

"She lifted one foot trustingly and thankfully, looking in his face as a babe will look in his mother's.

"'Poor little foot!'

"Her silk stockings were like gossamer, her dainty shoes fastened by jet clasps. Keptsky rubbed the little foot quite dry with his handkerchief, then he held it a little longer between his hands to warm it.

"'The other one now.'

"As she changed her foot she lost her balance, and put her hand for an instant on Keptsky's shoulder. They laughed, and Lydia went on laughing, with her foot in Keptsky's hands."

In this manner the girl, who thought that she was *blasée,* is wooed and won by an adventurer.

Discovers villainy of her fiancé.

Calmi tries to open Lydia's eyes to the villainy of her fiancé by taking her to a disreputable hotel, where, through a partition wall, she listens to a significant interview between Keptsky and a friend of hers. On coming home Lydia dismisses Calmi with many thanks for his true

friendship; then she picks up a daintily chiselled pistol and shoots a ball through her heart.

Teresa is the counterpart of *Lydia*. This story of another unmarried woman evinces the same power of sympathy, the same clearness of judgment. The absence of conventionalism, the entire veracity, give the impression of events in real life. We know that this is no wanton display of sores, but rather a surgeon's energetic treatment by the knife of a diseased limb that threatens the whole social organism.

"Teresa" is the counterpart of Lydia.

In a dull little town, in the cheerless house of an employee, Teresa, the eldest of a large brood, has toiled and slaved from her earliest childhood. Her sickly mother, exacting father, quarrelsome brother, the twin sisters, and the baby; the burden of housekeeping—all is on her shoulders, and no one feels its injustice. Teresa accomplishes her weary round of tasks, knowing no happiness except her brooding tenderness for her youngest sister and in silent communion of thoughts with her mother. "They had never exchanged confidences, that sort of thing being alien to their natures; but during many a tedious hour spent in silent needlework they understood each other's thoughts, and their hearts communed in sorrow and dejection."

"Teresa" is the family burden-bearer.

Teresa finally meets with her life's opportunity. Young Orlandi is a good fellow; he falls in love

Loves Orlandi, but cannot marry him.

with her, and she gives him her whole, fluttering heart, with a simplicity, a confidence, a diffidence quite delightful. The dawn of love, the first glimpse of happiness, her maidenly scruples when she allows herself to speak to her sweetheart from the window after nightfall, are idyllic. Orlandi makes his formal demand to Teresa's father, but is refused. Signor Caccia desires to keep for his son and heir the small portion which should be his daughter's *dot*. Orlandi presses his suit; he will even accept a dowerless wife, and would persuade Teresa to elope—no farther than his own sister's house; but she refuses. Teresa's slavery now binds her with all the ties of affection, religious habit, and social prejudice. She is needed, yet not much loved.

Her sisters grow up, marry, and gladly leave the cheerless home without a thought for the eldest sister who, her mother dead, is now left to tend the irascible, invalid father. He too dies, and Teresa, having outlived all her hopes, and even her grief, has become a cranky spinster. Suddenly a letter from Orlandi brings the news that he is poor and dying in Parma. Teresa obeys the impulse of her heart and goes to her wretched sweetheart.

Italian girl unprepared for marriage.

The Italian girl is almost as ill prepared for marriage as for single blessedness; in the enforced seclusion of a school-convent, or in the

almost equal seclusion of home life, she is as ignorant of the world's thought as she is deprived of comradeship with young men. Fortunate is such a girl when selected by a kind, sensible husband, who rubs off the nonsense with a gentle hand, without bruising the delicate heart beneath! The greater activity of housekeeping and of social intercourse and the absorbing cares of maternity may happily terminate the crisis, and then the helpless and unhappy girl blossoms into sedate motherhood. Neera has a hopeful nature, and in the novel *L'Indomani* she has accurately observed and delicately described this metamorphosis of the giddy girl into a sensible wife and happy mother.

"L'Indomani" the story of a wife.

Marta is the only daughter of a rich widow, Signora Oldifredi. She has received the usual education of a girl in her position. Her manners are refined, her heart is pure. As she is already twenty-two and has good reason to trust her mother's discernment, she cheerfully accepts the fiancé offered her. Alberto is introduced to Marta at the theatre, and on coming home her mother discourses about the young man's wealth, position, and prospects. Marta meets him again at church; then he calls twice at her house. She is impressed by his good looks, the sweet-smelling sprig of lavender in his buttonhole, and his acquiescence in all her opinions about the prima donna and the orchestra.

Why Marta marries. A marriage is arranged, and Marta expects to soon fall in love with Alberto. Of course "if a girl wants to get married she must put up with something," and Alberto "is neither crooked nor elderly nor an invalid, as are some of the husbands she knows." She thinks that perfect happiness will begin when they are left to themselves, and a complete communion of thoughts and ideas binds her to her Alberto. She surprises her husband with her sentimentality, and, though he loves her, he cannot understand her gushing raptures. She is inclined to take things tragically, worries about trifles, makes a mountain of every mole-hill, exacts a demonstrative tenderness from her unemotional husband, and runs the risk of losing his affection by dragging from oblivion his long-forgotten love-affair.

Altogether she is making herself miserable. Good advice and examples of patience are not wanting around her, and many subordinate figures are lifelike and interesting. Such is the mother of a large family, who keeps a very pretty maid servant; or the retired doctor, who professes this unconventional view about marriage:

"Love means either obligation or sin." "For an honest woman love means either a duty or a sin. When it is not a contract exalted into a sacrament—something equivalent to the sale of a meadow or the extreme unction—it is a defiant rebellion against law, religion, and honour.

"Man has artfully idealized the first case by

saying to his victims: 'You are the joy of the hearth, the queens of our homes, unto your care we entrust the honour of our name and our future prospects; you are the embodiment of peace and quiet.' If he had been candid he would have said: 'You are the smaller evil, and we only put up with it after trying all the others; you are the panacea we apply to our many sores, the feather-bed we appreciate after the camp pallet. You bestow on us your youth, your innocence, your life-long aspirations; and we who possess neither youth, nor innocence, nor any ideality to give you in exchange, we offer you the most commonplace and most easily obtainable gift; a thing which you might have found at every street corner but for our having monopolized it, in order to swell its value by denying you its free enjoyment. We have set up decorum, propriety, all our petty human laws, against the great law of nature. From your earliest childhood, from the age of sweetmeats, we have held before your eyes this cake, warning you: "Mind, you'll only get it if you deserve it by being very patient, modest, and self-forgetful."'" *Why a man marries.*

Marta smiles sceptically at this pessimism, but she notices around her many instances of its truth. She is miserable and fretful until the birth of her babe. Then, as Marta lies in her bed, full of the joy of young motherhood, Signora Oldi- *Marta made happy by motherhood*

fredi speaks the lesson of practical good sense which resumes the whole book.

Man's standpoint toward love.

"'Men value love for what it is, and sooner or later they leave it in the background, whilst they strive after other ideals: there's public life, business, pleasure, books for them; women, too, must look about for something else, and find it in religion and maternal love, which are but a transfiguration of the other love. Its more idealized essence soars heavenwards, and that which was an instinct of the flesh buds forth with new vigor in our tenderness for our little ones.'"

"Senio" the study of a selfish man.

Senio is the study of a man's character, but even here Neera has introduced a spinster. Corinna is a heroine of sisterly devotion. She has long ago renounced her share in the pleasures of life that her brother might be more amply provided; for his sake she lives with the strictest economy in their native country town, and her only desire is to see him happy and successful. Yet this constant self-denial brings its reward, while Senio, despite his opportunities, ends miserably his selfish existence.

Senio finishes his studies at the university, becomes a lawyer, and, in his resolve to avoid all pain and enjoy life to the uttermost, he is led into abject selfishness.

He is warmly welcomed home. Corinna keeps

house with a spinster friend, Orsola, and with them lives Dina, Orsola's niece, a charming girl of fifteen. Senio enjoys the simple dignity of this household, its quietness, and smiles indulgently on their industry and neatness. "Of this smile each one of the three women took her share."

Is loved by beautiful Dina.

Senio resists the temptation of "reading the riddle" of that pretty young face so earnestly intent on his; Dina never hears the words she had been scarcely daring to expect.

Woman has no place in his life, and Senio despises those of his fellow-creatures who "supinely" assume the duties and toils of a family.

He soon tires of Corinna's hospitality, and, returning to town, is most successful as a lawyer. Donna Clara, a beautiful widow, has the ill luck of charming Senio, and imagines he loves her. Being but a warm-hearted, sincere woman, Donna Clara trusts the man she considers as her husband. Senio's infatuation soon changes to satiety, and he so neglects her that she sets him free. The young man is not at all ashamed of himself. "Conscience is his guide," and his conscience approves of his actions. "Love is nothing better than the necessity one creature has for another, an egotistical instinct like the appetite for food and sleep. Modern philosophy has set it back to its proper place—reproduction

Senio loves then wearies of Donna Clara.

of the species—disrobing it of all the sentimental and poetical halo which poets and women had thrown over this miserable corpse, too long mistaken for a deity."

Even Senio's grief for the death of his sister is tainted with selfishness: "'Oh, sister dear!' he exclaims, kissing her again and again, 'do not go . . . . do not leave me alone!'

"Corinna's dimmed eyes alighted on Dina's figure where she knelt by her bedside, and lingered there awhile."

But Senio misses this last chance of redemption.

Becomes victim of worthless woman.

When Senio steps from his train a few days later he is accosted by a woman who in time becomes indispensable to his comfort, appeals to his worst instincts, and profits by his weakness. Profession, friendship, even respectable acquaintances, are all renounced for this worthless woman.

Donna Clara hears of the moral ruin of the man she still loves, and sends Stefano to rescue him. Stefano points out his peril and reveals the history of his degraded companion . . . . but Senio stops him with a groan. "'Hold, she is my wife!'"

The subject is not new, but its treatment is original.

Neera boldly attacks prejudice; she is uncon-

ventional, but she is never wantonly indelicate. Besides her many novels, she is a constant contributor to the *Fanfulla della Domenica*, and her essays and short papers exhibit largeness of view and sincerity of accent.

Neera is unconventional, but not indelicate.

One of her short essays upon the mission of women may be condensed into these words:

"From the baseness of her position in pagan ages woman has been raised by Christianity to a higher level. Mary is the embodiment of beauty and duty, and the mysticism of the Middle Ages has added love to this ideal and acknowledged her sway in the poems of the courts of love. She has been worshipped and obeyed in the castle and the cloister, but our modern civilization denotes a backward step. Woman nowadays is neither respected nor loved as she should be; her name is everywhere; her image lavishly used in advertisements on every wall. But what influence does she really exert? The sceptic smiles and the materialist approves; but the philosopher looks beyond the present hour and waits hopefully."

Her opinion of modern woman's position.

GRAZIA DELEDDA

GRAZIA DELEDDA

Grazia Deledda reveals a new world.

JUST as a strange orchid in a London hothouse may evoke visions of its birthplace in some mysterious Amazonian forest, so the novel that presents one aspect of some primitive, almost unvisited region may suggest to our imagination a whole new world, reveal something of the soul of an unknown people, and thus open a new horizon to human sympathy. It is because the novels of Grazia Deledda are faithful revelations of such a humanity that they deserve consideration.

She is typically Sardinian.

Sardinian she is, Grazia Deledda, in every trait of her art. Her realistic observation admits of the poetic fatalism and symbolism dear to primitive people; her style has the unconventional abruptness of a rough literature, and her conception of the great principles of morality are those of her people.

The sacredness of the family her theme.

She has avoided the two opposing currents in the Italian literary world: humanitarian socialism and æsthetic individualism. Ignoring all transitory social relations, she depicts that first essential, irreducible nucleus—the family. The sacredness of the family is the basis of the Sardinian code of morals, and the protection of the family the ideal of Sardinian honour.

"Anime Oneste" is largely autobiographic.

In every line of Grazia Deledda's first novel, *Anime Oneste* (Honest Souls), there breathes the charm of unpremeditated autobiography, the confession of a guileless soul. It is a brave spirit—thoughtful, considerate, upright—that of Annicca, the little heiress. In her eventless yet well-filled existence we have that sympathy with men and things, that discernment of the best and ignoring of the worst, which are Deledda's own essential gifts.

The complex Sardinian character.

The society in which she moves is lifelike. The strange alloy of rude instincts and acuteness, of bigotry and ingenuity, the inherited faith in antique poetic rites, that little blue flower of mystic reliance in the efficacy of pilgrimages and vows, all those manifold elements that make up the peculiar Sardinian character, are delightfully interpreted.

Even in this first volume there are two characters that incarnate two different ideals of life. The two brothers Velena are as unlike in face and mind as two brothers can be. Cesario is the clever fellow who is persuaded that he is a genius, and accordingly scorns the old-fashioned manners of his people and the simple pleasures and duties of family life.

"Cesario was an aristocrat; he had a bedroom all to himself, which no one used even in his absence. It was filled with books and newspapers, and redolent with the smell of cigars."

This appalling luxury was aggravated in the eyes of Annicca by the impropriety of appearing at dinner in slippers. Then, also, Cesario's bright eyeglass and other trinkets "jarred in the quiet household like a dash of brilliant colour in a soberly painted picture," and startled her with the vague menace of unknown dangers.

Annicca typical of Sardinia.

Little Annicca—whose affections and experience of life have never strayed beyond the near-by hills—little Annicca shares the prejudices of her people against large towns, fine clothes, newspapers, cigars, and the many items, good and bad, that make up life in the continental universities. Rome, where Cesario has gone to finish his studies, is to her a Babylon of perdition. Every time her cousin returns home for his holiday she notes the effects of this growing perversion.

Whilst all the family cheerfully submits to pinching and hard work to provide for the future great man's maintenance in luxury, he alone is dejected and dispirited. Cesario leads a wretched life. His title of *avvocato,* so hard to get, proves valueless here at home in the struggle for daily bread.

Contrasted with this tempest-tossed Cesario is Sebastiano, the home-loving, industrious brother, prosperous and helpful, and consequently blessed with all the rewards which the novelist could shower on her hero. Under his

tillage the barren mountain *tanca* becomes a fruitful farm; his sisters, protected and directed by him, marry well; his cousin Annicca accepts his love and they live happily in the mountain farm, far from the poison of new ideas, and breed a plenty of little Sardinians.

"Elias Portula" a study of Sardinian religious ideas.

The novel *Elias Portolu* is an interesting study of religious sentiment in the primitive minds of the Sardinians, and a careful analysis of the relation between this mode of interpreting the Christian dogma and the patriarchal compactness of the household.

A rough set these Portolus—cattle-breeders, charcoal-burners, friendly to brigands and suspicious of *carabinieri,* yet God-fearing and honest according to a certain standard. In vain have time's waves swept past their sea-bound coast; primitive, pagan, self-respecting, detesting the written law, but loyal to principles, they represent a large class.

The Portolus representative of Sardinia.

Zio[1] Berte is thus introduced: "The old fox was a short man, with a famous black shock of tangled hair drooping before his red, sore eyes and over his ears, mixing with a long beard, equally black and equally tangled. His clothes were unclean, and over all he wore a long sleeveless jacket of black sheepskin, with the wool outside, so that out of all this black hair

[1] The names Zio (Uncle) and Zia (Aunt) are generally given to middle-aged or elderly people.

nothing emerged but his big red-brown hands, and on his face a big red-brown nose."

He is at the time taking uncommon trouble with his own appearance, disentangling part of his mane, oiling and plaiting it in order to solemnize the two great events that are happening in his household. His elder son, Pietro, is betrothed to Maddalena Scada, and his second son, Elias, is coming home, after spending two years in "the King's service," which means in the continental prisons.

The Sardinian attitude towards the government.

It is difficult for us to appreciate the spirit with which the low-class Sardinians submit to a government and to laws which they do not understand. It is a sullen opposition, a distrust which seldom bursts into rebellion, but never recognizes the justice of the law. A man is not less popular for having fallen into the clutches of the police. Elias is greeted by the friendly wish, "Such another affair a hundred years hence." Which is not meant for a reproach.

It is not only in his looks that Elias while in prison has become an alien to his weather-beaten, rough-mannered family: a change has been wrought in his character, which has broken the intimate communion of souls. Hence he becomes a cause of dissension that must sooner or later create havoc in the closely united family group.

In the long, dreary hours of captivity he has puzzled about many a problem. Whence and wherefore this right of punishing him for smuggling or cattle lifting? Boastful criminals, grandiloquent *mafiosi,* have taught him to admire this rebellion against the laws. The prison chaplain has given him a prayer-book, which rejoices his mother's heart.

Greater still is Zia Annedda's joy that her son means to keep the vow he has made in prison and go on pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Francis on Mount Lula, for *San Francescu bellu* is the old dame's favourite saint, and she persuades the rest of the family and Pietro's fiancée to join the party.

The pilgrimage to the Franciscan shrine.

This pilgrimage to the Franciscan shrine of Mount Lula is a delightful series of pictures over which the author lingers with fond remembrance of the patriarchal rite.

The scene is biblic. On the antique cars drawn by yoked oxen, on shaggy-maned ponies, carrying in their wallets the traditional cakes and the offerings for the saint, in their picturesque costumes of every Oriental hue, they start in the early dawn of a May morning. Across woodland and hills, amidst the intoxicating perfume of wild nature, in the briny breeze of the plain, through leafy vales, and up purple mountains these pilgrims go.

"The high mountain towards which they marched rose blue against the sky, tinged with a lingering rosy hue of dawn. The wild valley of the Isalle was mantled with herbs and flowers. Over the paths the flowered broom hung its heavy blossoms, like lamps of gold. The mount Orthobene, robed in the green of its thickets, the yellow of its flowered broom, and the purple of clover blossoms, was left behind in the pearly background. Suddenly the vale expanded, desert plains appeared to view, covered with glittering green, and dewy under the rays of the rising sun."

A bit of Deledda's descriptive power.

The halt at noontime in a breezy plain, fragrant with the scent of dog roses, the last brisk scramble up the Lula, the arrival at the sanctuary. "The camp is close at hand, here is the pretty church with the little houses clustering round it, its yard, its enclosing wall, its open gateway. It looks like a tiny castle of old, all red and white against the intense blue of the sky and the tender green of the wavy heath."

The Portolus, because descended from one of the patrons of this chapel, have their quarters inside the *cumbissia maggiore*. This *cumbissia* "is a long dark building, roughly flagged and thatched. Here and there on the floor a stone hearth is raised, and on the bare wall a big wooden knob is fixed. Each one of these knobs

The cumbissia maggiore.

indicates the hereditary place of one of the privileged families."

Thus, packed into a limited space, held together by their own narrow ideal, these people live in closest intimacy, eating frugal meals, sleeping rolled in rough blankets in innocent promiscuity. There is something strangely poetic and suggestive of biblical dignity in the stateliness and composure of the women accomplishing their daily duties, and something suggestive of Eastern customs in the watchfulness of manly jealousy in this survival of ancient rites.

The unfortunate love of Elias and Maddalena.

Yet even amid this pastoral quiet and solemn peace we hear the first rumblings of the storm that in the end wrecks Elias's life. Here Maddalena Scada, promised to Pietro, has come with her future mother-in-law, and here suddenly Elias realizes that he loves his brother's fiancée and that his love is returned. Stupefied by this discovery, groping for counsel, accustomed to reliance on priestly direction, Elias at once seeks *Prete* Porcheddu.

Prete Porcheddu, the jolly priest.

Prete Porcheddu, lifelike and original, is a portrait. God must be served *in lætitia.* Hence let us dance and sing and enjoy the life which has been granted us. Honest pleasure for him! Now "honest pleasure" permits an extra flagon of wine, endless chatty evenings with the young fellows, open admiration of pretty girls, and

other things which may not make him an orthodox priest, but certainly make him a pleasant companion.

He soon reads Elias's heart, and sobers into a stern counsellor. "You are in love with Maddalena. Why, you need not blush, man, nor scowl in that way. There is no shame in this so far. It would be a shame if you did not conquer yourself. But you will conquer yourself."

Elias's struggle with his love for Maddalena.

Elias is persuaded to renouncement because it answers to one of the tendencies of his double nature; but soon the impulsive brutal instinct rebels, his troubled mind yearns for some other authoritative advice, and seeks Zio Martinu, the wise old shepherd who has lived so long in the mountains that he has embodied the spirit of those lonely summits. A prophet-like figure which fits beautifully with the general plan of this patriarchal world: "Tall as a giant, strong and upright, with long yellow hair and a thick grey beard, a face like beaten copper, Zio Martinu has the stateliness of a prehistoric man."

Zio Martinu, the mountain shepherd.

A man must be a man, says this oracle of the mountain. Elias must openly and fearlessly woo the girl, and persuade his brother to release her from a reluctant promise. If Pietro will not be persuaded, then Elias must fight it out in manly contest. But by all means he must not allow this marriage to be accomplished, since

it can bring nothing but misery and temptation to the darkest of sins. This advice answers to Elias's real nature, yet he must consider. He fears his burly brother, and also he shrinks from inflicting pain on Pietro.

Elias temporizes with his temptation.

Elias weakly adopts the middle course. He leaves home; but he goes no further than the family *tanca* on the hill, and he occasionally comes down to Nuoro. His sinful passion increases, and his resolution is weakened by the sight of Maddalena's ill treatment by her rough husband, who has never loved her deeply, whom she has never loved at all.

"A grave and tragical sorrow overpowered him now; he despaired of everything, hated himself and all his fellow-creatures. Formerly his despondency had been sweetened by kindly and tender feelings, but now he began to thirst for vengeance." He has endeavoured to act righteously, sacrificing his own to other people's happiness, and now what he thought right has turned out wrong.

Why is it so? Why must fate trifle thus with men? In the solitude of a wooden hut the half-civilized shepherd thus ponders over the great enigma. Sorrow, deep, bitter, hopeless sorrow, sweeps away his faith, dims his conscience, and stirs rebellion. In this dangerous frame of mind he comes down to Nuoro in the middle of carnival festivities. After an intoxicating dance

in the promiscuity of this Bacchanalia, the sin is committed.

The sin of Elias and Maddalena.

Frightened at the possible consequences of his fault, unable to face the situation, and maddened by remorse, Elias flies to his *tanca*. In vain! For when Maddalena comes all his resolutions are swept away.

Zio Martinu scolds and comforts the sinner who seeks shelter by his side "as the lamb crawls under the oak in the hour of tempest." Then, under the influence of *Prete* Porcheddu, Elias's thoughts turn towards a religious ideal. He is persuaded to enter a seminary and become a priest.

Elias turns to the religious life.

The religious idea daily grows stronger, and when, at the death of Pietro, Elias is expected to follow the traditional and talmudic custom of marrying his brother's widow and caring for his brother's putative child (which is, in fact, his own), he declares that he cannot change his purpose of taking holy orders.

How he wrestles against the allurements of youthful desire, of human tenderness, and of social duty; how he prays and suffers, yearning for the peace which he has never known, is all related with the impartiality of a psychological document.

Complexities of the Sardinian religious sentiment.

It is a sincere study of religious feeling among the Sardinians, and strangers to the island will wonder at the contradictions, oddities, and con-

trasts of their creed. Through pagan rites, the survival of arcadic pastimes that suggest the sylvan *peana,* we trace the progress of the Christian idea, seeking admittance by promises of eternal bliss or frightening into submission by visions of eternal fires, in these souls which have so few hereditary traits, so few aspirations, in common with other believers in the Christian dogma.

Zio Martinu embodies the natural Sardinian religion.

The figure of Zio Martinu is left in the shadow, but he is the embodiment of a natural religion better suited to the Sardinian mind than any imported one. The problem here, as in all these belated groups of society, is how to remove the tottering, obsolete props of fanaticism and prejudice, the curb of superstitious fear, when there is not available a well-defined, clearly intelligible code of moral law comprehensible by such peoples.

"Elias Portolu" points to a vital problem in Sardinia.

Grazia Deledda sees that *Prete* Porcheddu and the greater number of his brethren are not the best of guides; but where are better men to be found? Where a stronger moral curb? Let wise statesmen study the problem; the novelist has done her part when she has called attention to the subject and inspired some pity and love for the sufferers.

Poverty, the absence of trade, and the glamour of a university title leading to the overcrowded liberal professions send many an island

youth to the great schools on the mainland. And the result is usually unfortunate.

"Cenere" a study of unwise education.

In *Honest Souls* the situation is presented with the inaccuracy and prejudice of a youthful writer, and lately in *Cenere* (Ashes) in the gloomy and bitter spirit which results from long brooding over the matter. Rousseau has hardly been more penetrated of his subject, when he preached that fine letters and science had perverted human society, than Grazia Deledda when she describes the moral and intellectual devastation caused in the mind and heart of her hero by his course of studies.

The childhood of Anania.

The boy Anania is the illegitimate offspring of a rich landowner, Zio Atonzo, and of Olì, the dark-eyed penniless daughter of a woodsman. Anania's childhood is pleasantly spent in the hut of Zia Grazia in the mountain hamlet of Fonni. Zia Grazia, widow of a brigand, has given shelter to mother and child, and when Olì elopes with a second lover, Grazia keeps the child and allows it to grow up free and happy amid the bracing influences of primitive habits and upland air. When the boy is seven years old his father is persuaded to adopt his little Ishmael, who finds in the childless Sara a most affectionate stepmother.

Anania is sent to the great Roman university and returns home with a degree. He is betrothed to the girl he loves, and he goes up to

Fonni to visit Zia Grazia and for a trip up Mount Orthobene.

The effect of his ill-balanced education.

His natural morbidness has been accentuated by ill-balanced intellectual study, and all his neurotic imaginings are concentrated on this outcast mother of his, sunk to the lowest abjection, and whom he wishes yet dreads to see. He compels Zia Grazia to tell him all the sordid story, and then insists that she go and fetch the poor woman, and Anania, waiting for her in the hut, is so full of suppressed wrath that even the swinging of a door pushed to and fro by the gusty wind unnerves him.

His meeting with his mother.

"As he rose to go and shut it, his face was darkened by an angry scowl. Thus he appeared to the miserable woman who, cowering and trembling in her tattered clothes, now came up. He looked at her and she looked at him, fear and diffidence in the eyes of both. Neither thought of putting out a hand or exchanging any sort of greeting; a whole world of grief and error divided them irretrievably—worse than if they had been deadly foes."

Exhausted by a low fever, shrunk by habitual starvation, branded by the stigmata of vice, "her sallow, ashy face lit by two large clear eyes, like those of a diseased wildcat," the wretched woman crouches and weeps under the storm of abuse which her son hurls at her.

With all its brutal, unfilial violence this scene

has a peculiar interest when it is read in its place in the novel, and comes as the crowning explosion of long pent-up sorrow and humiliation, extenuating somewhat the cruelty of the son's words with the remembrance of the misery he has endured. The figure of Olì, too passive and abject to awaken interest, is in part redeemed by her self-sacrifice. Her son has decided to give up all his prospects of love and marriage, all his chances of a happy and honourable life, to take her into his house, but she commits suicide and thus releases him.

The self-sacrifice of Olì.

Of all Grazia Deledda's works the most original, the most accurately observed, and most artistically expressed is *Il Vecchio della Montagna* (The Old Man of the Mountain).

"Il Vecchio della Montagna" the best of Deledda's works.

Blind old Zio Pietro is a noble and simple figure towering, like the spirit of his country, above a crowd of meaner creatures that struggle and make love, toil and cheat, blindly groping towards the peace and serenity which his unquestioning faith reveals to his sightless eyes.

It is a Homeric figure, this of the silver-bearded shepherd. The solitary life in a mountain hut, influenced only by the recurring changes of season and of weather, the accumulated power of silent meditation, of self-taught prayer and unspoken yearnings—all these and the inherited traits of an ancient race, have made Zio Pietro a superior being in the eyes of his

Zio Pietro a powerful conception.

neighbours, whose unbridled passions, plottings, deceits, violence, and feuds have turned these mountaineers into animals of prey, foul-mouthed smugglers, deaf to every sentiment of honesty and duty.

His character unifies the novel.

The picture of this little world consists of many short episodes, which at first appear loosely connected and crude; but attention reveals that they compose a harmonious whole, and that the link that connects every part is there: it is the spirit of the mountains, the blind old man who moves about, all-embracing and all-understanding.

His death symbolically suggestive.

Few passages in the modern Italian romance are more symbolically suggestive than the death of Zio Pietro. Urged by the desire to save his son, the blind man attempts to walk down to the nearest village, trusting to the sun-rays and the breeze to direct his steps along the slippery paths, and sure that a Divine guidance inspires him. How he gropes and feels his way with his stick, how he prays and hopes, how he slips and finds an easy death in the bosom of that kind nature that had always been his foster mother, are the simple elements out of which the writer has made such a picture, so proportioned that no partial quotation could do it justice.

Rather than an imitation of any former conception of art, this appears like the dawn of a

new form of the Italian novel. The more so if we consider it as part of a movement that has been growing of late in every other branch of the Italian art. The same breath of enlightened intellectuality which has prompted Michetti in his pictures, D'Annunzio in *The Triumph of Death* and in his *Figlia di Iorio;* Mascagni in his *Cavalleria Rusticana,* and Capuana in his plays to translate into new forms of art the peculiar traits of savage beauty preserved from modern vulgarism in the all but unknown Abruzzo, and in the much wronged Sicily, has also inspired Grazia Deledda in her Sardinian sketches.

"Il Vecchio della Montagna" heralds the new Italian novel.

The quaintness, the originality of those local customs, the interesting anomalies of those cramped or distorted psyches, of those benumbed consciences, are not new elements of reality, but the novelty consists in this exact yet poetic rendering, in this interpretation, both so true and so idealized: this we hopefully greet as an earnest of new and truly original Italian art.

ENRICO ANNIBALE BUTTI

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The moral lesson present in all fiction, as in life.

FROM the first rude epos sung in primeval forests down to the most recent popular novel, every work of fiction is generally supposed to contain some moral lesson. The author may begin the last chapter with words importing "this teaches us," or, with higher sense of art, he may allow the reader to make the application; but always instinctively do we apportion to every human action its appropriate retribution or reward. And this instinct is the prop of religion, the basis of philosophy.

History witnesses to many interpretations of this mysterious law; indeed, the ethical evolution of a people may be traced by these successive and progressive standards.

This predilection is mirrored in the popular fiction of every age. Reward or punishment is apportioned according to the contemporary standard of justice. Thus, though the *chanson de geste* exalted faith and honour, strength and valour, for the infinite injustices of life it could only promise compensation and punishment in a future existence.

With the advent of better social conditions novelists employed kings and princes as instruments of righteous retribution, while in our

times the magistrate has done as much good work in the last chapters of novels as in real courts of justice.

Italian conceptions of the problem. In Italy this universal instinct has been modified by racial, religious, and social influences; by the Greek ideal that emphasized social virtues, and also by the Latin "*Res publica suprema lex.*" Yet even these tests of right and wrong do not satisfy the discriminating standards of justice demanded by modern intelligence and a complex civilization.

D'Annunzio scorns the problem and attempts no explanation. Fogazzaro tries to present it, but his influence is impaired through excessive fidelity to a Church, which to most Italians represents an obsolete political principle and an exploded philosophy. Nor can these Italians find counsel and guidance in foreign literatures. Tolstoi is read and admired, Dostoievsky is imitated. Though they cannot infuse their mysticism into Italian minds, yet they taught how the echo of every action resounds in the secret chambers of the soul; they showed that by immutable law every seed of action must bear fruit after its kind.

The teachings of Tolstoi and Dostoievsky.

Butti's "L'Immorale." Enrico Annibale Butti follows this new method in a purely Italian and positivist spirit. In his first novel, *L'Immorale,* he discards all religious and social chastisement for crime, and sets the evil-doer face to face with his sin. The

problem is so concisely stated that it is already half solved. Can a man peacefully enjoy the fruits of his crime? If conscience is only a religious bugbear, why can we not shake it off like every other obsolete dogma?

Paolo Ermoli, the egoist.

Paolo Ermoli's cousin, Diego Rebeschi, is rich; he is also engaged to the beautiful widow Donna Fulvia. Paolo Ermoli is his bosom friend, is the sole beneficiary of the will he has made, and is the confidant of his love. Paolo Ermoli, who has always desired Diego's money, desires also Diego's bride. A profound egoist, he considers Diego as an obstacle between himself and his right to wealth and love. He owes it to himself to remove this impediment to the perfection of his ego.

The crime of Ermoli.

One summer day, when the two cousins are tramping through the Emilian hills, Diego falls into one of those stagnant, treacherous pools where small mud volcanoes spurt viscid, slimy liquid. By outstretching his hand Paolo could save him, but he stands aside, watching the agony of the drowning man as he rises twice to the surface "like a monstrous statue of clay," clutching at the slippery edge with one hand and lifting the other in despair.

As another consequence of this crime, an innocent, weak-minded wretch is sentenced to life imprisonment, whilst Paolo prospers in his guilt.

Ermoli's punishment by conscience.

On the morning of his marriage day with Donna Fulvia he quiets his conscience by a reiteration of those sophisms that have guided his life. He glories in his victory over cowardly prejudices; he is an animal of prey, the *felis homo,* feeding by right on weaker creatures. Yet this content is only maintained by perpetual effort. Ghastly visions rise. The coldness of a friend who avoids shaking hands with him; the sight of Dostoievsky's book on Donna Fulvia's table; the discovery of Diego's photograph in her album, start shuddering reminiscences.

The marriage ceremony, the short journey, all these enervating delays at last come to an end, and the newly married pair reach their beautiful villa on the banks of the Sanio. But now, the cup of bliss within his grasp, with only an open door between him and his bride, even in this moment of victory the conqueror is defeated. Donna Fulvia tells him of an absurd and anonymous letter, charging him with this murder. When, exhausted by emotion, he quits the bridal chamber and retires to sleep in his own room, horrid dreams awake him, cold drops start on his brow, a sickening sense clutches at his heart.

He knows now that far from being a superior man, the *felis homo*, he is but the sport of his inborn evil tendencies. He remembers that first crime—stealing from his mother. He re-

members that face and those clear, staring eyes; his mother's horrified cry, "Oh, Paolo, how could you do this!" He feels that all his ensuing life has been the fatal development of the bad instincts that were in the boy.

Ermoli's punishment logical and just.

This conclusion is both logical and according to the demands of justice. The punishment equals the crime, and this result is attained by the simplest means. No intervention of external agents, no interference of unexpected causes, only the rational, logical development of that interpretation of life which, when incomplete, waylays its victim; but which, grasped in its wholeness, is good, like all truth.

Ermoli, conquered by the despised moral law! Ermoli himself, the avenger of his crime! Ermoli, the very spring of his volupty become the principal agent of his torment! This is, indeed, a departure from orthodox teaching.

This boldness in applying positivist doctrine to a work of fiction and reducing the novel to one personage (the others are shadows) is Butti's claim to originality.

Butti's "Automaton."

To such an investigator of ethical dilemmas the contest between sordid flesh and divine afflatus was sure to be attractive, though he offers no solution of the problem. The *Automaton* is the portrait of that most interesting char-

acter, the irresolute man, who cannot translate his cravings and impulses into deeds.

Attilio Valda. Attilio Valda is provided with all the advantages of birth, breeding, health that should ensure social success; but the simplest snares are sufficient for his undoing. Zola in his *Amours de Claude,* Daudet in *Sapho,* Mirbeau in *Le Calvaire,* have told sad stories of men vainly striving against a degrading passion. In *Automaton* Butti tries to compete with these masters.

Valda's education and heredity. He tells how Attilio has been schooled, fed, petted, and scolded; what tendencies he inherited from his father and what from his mother; the books he preferred and the sports he disliked. At his mother's deathbed he evinces the introspective neurosis characteristic of his degenerate nature. Then through three successive love-affairs he develops his sluggish cruelty, helpless imbecility, and shameless submissiveness.

His love-affairs and his downfall. The first woman loves him with a slave's docility; he deserts her after the birth of their child. Then he flirts with the beautiful Countess Anna Pieri. This sentimental coquette for a time keeps her admirer within bounds, but finally yields to his desire; and then—this extraordinary Attilio leaves her castle next morning! Because, forsooth, it would take an effort of will and some physical exertion to alter his

plans! When such a man meets a cunning and perverted woman he inevitably becomes her prey. This vulgar adventuress gives him the nickname of "Automaton," and drags him to the lowest depths.

"Automaton" a psychological study.

When first published, *Automaton* was mistaken for a realistic novel because of some crude love-scenes. But Butti's intent is to give us a psychological study. Indeed, it is so oppressively a study! Had Butti sometimes forgotten to propound his problem and allowed his heart to speak, he might have created a truer and more lifelike personage.

Butti's "The Soul."

Butti's novel, *The Soul,* telling how a sceptical medical student loves an epileptic young woman, how her ravings and hallucinations convert him to a belief in the immortality of the soul, contains a crushing amount of detail. The book is tough reading, but its sternness of purpose and attention to detail compel respect.

Butti's "Enchantment" expounds a moral question.

In *Enchantment,* better characterized by its second title, *The Syren,* Butti has expounded a moral question with some inspiration and much art.

This "syren," that allures and finally seduces the spirit of man from the realms of abstract thought to the enjoyment of Nature's great feast, is not merely the fair maiden Flavia Boris who makes love to Aurelio Imberido. She is the allegorical embodiment of all affections, in-

stincts, desires, reminiscences, and hopes that a morbid pietism had in darker ages declared unholy; that modern philosophy disparagingly names "animality."

Butti's "syren" is Life itself.

The "syren," whose magic spell seduces the chaste ego-worshipper Aurelio from his lonely rooms, cold speculations, vague dreams of selfish personal perfection, is LIFE!—Life, with all its joys and all its sorrows. She is the voice of the past, embodied in the old grandmother; she is the voice of appealing, suffering humanity; she is beauty's spirit, breathing in earth and sea and sky; she whispers in the breeze, she sings in the songs of birds.

Aurelio Imberido stops his ears, shuts his eyes, spurns the tempter; yet the magic works, his stronghold surrenders, and Life, insinuated by a woman's love, spreads through his veins, stirs his senses, rouses him to the duties of existence.

Aurelio Imberido, the egoist.

Secluded from society, with his cross old grandmother for only relative, Aurelio esteems the developing of his own ego the supreme duty. He believes himself a superior being, a pioneer, a leader of the common herd into new regions of life. He will relinquish all vulgar affections, all timid faith, all morbid pity for his fellow-creatures, and attain this noblest and greatest of aims.

Beauty leaves him unmoved, suffering dis-

gusts him. Cruelty to inferior creatures, human or otherwise, is an assertion of superior merit. His ideal is both aristocratic and individualist. Once the world acknowledged the supremacy of the strongest and the bravest, because these qualities were the fittest for the leaders of the common herd. Now the world should be the prey of the intellectuals: they should impose their superiority over the uneducated mass as the warrior or the feudal lord of old enforced submission over his vassals. Humanity can only advance by the massacre of the weak and the survival of the fittest. *Imberido's theory of life.*

This theory precludes every altruistic sentiment, all charity, every friendship; it even abolishes love! Love, the everlasting dupery; the trick of nature for the preservation of the species; the shameful conjunction of two bodies distracted by carnality. *Flavia Boris.*

Minutely, and with some poetic emotion, Butti prepares the future awakening of his soul. Flavia Boris has all the allurements and all the weakness of her sex. Beautiful and clever, to the charm of innocent maidenhood she adds the attraction of the woman that knows something of life. The young man, persuaded of his own insensibility, and unconscious of the fatal magnet, meets Flavia in her favourite forest walk. Together they stroll under verdant trees, through scented bowers, to an orchard. There

Flavia jestingly desires Aurelio to pluck some fruit of special flavour for being forbidden by the height of the tree and the enclosing wall.

From the topmost branches Aurelio gathers the ripe cherries. He is infected by the girl's spirit, he displays his strength and agility, gets excited, and when Flavia, intoxicated by this *tête-à-tête,* runs off with her harvest of fruit, he eagerly pursues her. Though Aurelio, like the wise Odysseus, stops his ears with wax, his nerves, his imagination, and his heart fall a prey to the magic, even whilst his rebel spirit strives for mastery.

At a dinner-party Aurelio discovers the beauty of the girl he has repelled. Her open-neck white gown inebriates him. When he slips from the dining-room he realizes how empty, meaningless, cold his life has been.

Through Flavia, Life the syren calls to Imberido.

Through Flavia, Life, the syren, instils her secret charm. Aurelio wanders through the woods, hoping to meet Flavia; he strives to attract her attention when they are among strangers, his mind opens to a larger sympathy with his fellow-creatures, his eyes perceive the beauty of the earth and sky.

Still he struggles, and in order to raise a barrier between the girl he already loves and himself, he tells her he has resolved never to love, that women are the living obstacle that fetters a man's activity to the low business of

bread earning and family breeding; that they have ever clipped the wings of genius and barred the way to real greatness. Even while he speaks he realizes that these arguments have lost much of their persuasive power.

Imberido's struggle against love.

On the lake, in a boat, on a quiet moonlit night, they are once more alone, Aurelio and Flavia; their words are inconsequent, but their looks are eloquent, their hearts know. Flavia's alluring blue eyes say: "I could love thee, nurse thee in sickness and sorrow, follow thee faithfully in exile. I can give balsam to thy aching heart. I proffer it with caressing hands in the undefiled cup. But then, thou must be mine, belong solely to me, be the slave that toils to feed me. What do I care for thine ambition? What are thy dreams to me? I see nothing in thee but the man predestined to beget my children and make my own existence joyous."

Aurelio feels the enchantment, reads the unspoken words, and strives to resist the temptation.

His character changes through love.

Other mute chords presently quiver. First he feels the bond of affection and blood that binds him to his grandmother, then his enlarged sympathy comprehends other fellow-creatures. "Another soul had taken the place of his own—a sensitive, fantastic soul, that disdained exact notions and cold abstractions, but was passionately attracted by gay and flitting objects, by the

sweet errors of imagination, the fluttering of half-formed ideas, in the twilight of legends and dreams. He was beginning to live, he was no longer an intellectual, he had become an artist. Adorning himself, beautifying everything around him, his life was tuned to rhythmic, harmonious sensations."

Imberido, the lover.

The dusty room, once encumbered with ponderous volumes, is now adorned with fresh flowers. Poetry is his favourite reading. With these poets love is everything! The universal harmony! The genial flame! Joy! Divinity! "What is life worth without love?" query these poets; and Imberido's newly enlightened spirit echoes: "Why have I hitherto checked every heart impulse, every nerve thrill?" And the syren answers: "Love can teach thee more than thy cold philosophy can fathom."

A poetic love-scene.

The closing chapter, a poetic love-scene in the orchard that witnessed their affection's birth, is the adequate crowning of this allegory. They meet, these two lovers, in the inebriating sweetness of a moonlit night; around them Nature breathes her intoxicating flower perfumes. Their souls accord. The woman offers herself in all the proud humility of trusting love; the man, conscious of his responsibility, rejoices in his power to give and receive the supreme joy of life. "Life is beautiful, and our hands are full with its most precious gifts—youth, liberty,

and love! All the grief we have endured was not in ourselves, but outside of us. . . . . The Universe is within us, we are the Universe! Oh, let us live and love intensely, pluck branch by branch all the tree of our youth, taste every joy, and learn every secret!"

Thus the book, begun with the exposition of cold egoism, ends with an epithalamium.

Butti and D'Annunzio contrasted.

Because religious feeling is absent from Butti's works, and because he sometimes strives to idealize the descriptions of nature, he has been mistaken for a follower of D'Annunzio. Consideration, however, shows that this resemblance is superficial, and the difference between the two novelists is essential. Neither as thinkers nor as artists are they alike. Irreligious they are both; but D'Annunzio is a pagan, Butti is an atheist.

D'Annunzio a pagan; Butti an atheist.

The former has the serenity of the Greek poet, whom doubts and misgivings have never shaken, satisfied in a creed that has seduced his imagination and failed to stir his reasoning power; the latter has the intellectual restlessness and thirst of knowledge which is the bane and the glory of the modern thinker. His convictions, for being the result of study, are apt to be shaken by further investigation; and for having contemplated the several aspects of each moral question his conclusion has lost some of

its strength. Life and its finality cannot, in a mind like his, trained to philosophical speculation, be resumed in a vague dream of Beauty.

Their personages compared.

If D'Annunzio has the serenity of an Ancient, Butti has the spirit of a Modern. If the moral figures of D'Annunzio's personages are delineated with the simplicity and firmness which bespeak the hand of the artist, secure of his own power, they lack that charm of living creatures—variability. D'Annunzio's characters exhibit only such slight modifications as external circumstances have wrought in the original character. With Butti we have a continual transformation of souls, traced with the hesitating pencil of the scholar who has weighed the inconstant growth and sudden depressions of the modern psyche, and failed to realize in himself an idealized type. Butti's characters begin where D'Annunzio's end.

Individualism, self-love, appreciation of beauty are common to both, but, whilst Tullio Hermil never doubts his right to sacrifice others for his own advantage, and only stretches a little further this opinion when he murders an innocent, and exults in this evidence of his superiority, and whilst the *Child of Volupty* is almost proud of his vile treachery to two women, the heroes of Butti are shaken and torn with the soul struggles of real throbbing humanity.

Even when, in the first chapters, Aurelio

Imberido only wishes to extend his own personality beyond the limits that warp the efforts of other men, he aspires to be "a man in the higher sense of the word," to ennoble his precarious existence by a grand dream. Because he can dream of sublime objects even when he meditates selfish doctrines we recognize in him a fellow-creature, a human soul, to be redeemed or lost, that suffers and rejoices as we do. Had he, like Stelio Effrena, been only the embodiment of an idea, he could not have been so transformed by a logical evolution as to grasp this conception of life. "He now began to feel that he was a part of this great whole, an atom in the great mass of life, his only superiority being that he was conscious of his littleness and uselessness in a world of active production."

Butti's Imberido contrasted with D'Annunzio's Effrena.

Neither D'Annunzio nor his heroes have ever humbled themselves to this comprehension; they are persuaded of their own exceptional grandeur; like true pagans, they have the virtue of pride. Butti, even when he has renounced his religious faith, preserves his Christian spirit; even when he strives for a scientific explanation of life, he remembers the teachings of a spiritual doctrine that limits the pride of the human intellect.

GABBRIELE D'ANNUNZIO

GABBRIELE D'ANNUNZIO

WHEN a man becomes famous, rises and overtops his fellows, and becomes a leader, ruler, and world-famous writer, he ceases to belong to himself, and becomes the property of the world.

The influence of D'Annunzio's writings.

When the writings of such a man have exercised a vast influence upon his contemporaries, and have compelled into the train of his followers and imitators the majority of the poets and novelists of his own land and many from other countries, those writings cannot be ignored.

Gabbriele D'Annunzio has done all this. We may admire or we may detest D'Annunzio. We may consider his writings harmful or otherwise. But so powerful has been their influence upon the minds of men, that they have become a factor in modern literature with which we must reckon.

D'Annunzio revels in the joy of life.

To D'Annunzio life is a newly revealed joy; he shakes off the weight of the ages and rebels against their gloom. He is inebriated by this first deep draught from the cup of pleasure. In a time and a country where a certain display of liberalism, of science, of altruism is the fashion, this adventurous young poet proclaims

An apostle of Beauty.

that individualism is the unique virtue, and the worship of Beauty the only true religion.

As around the masters of the Golden Age, the *"Quattrocento,"* so around this modern rebel, dissatisfied souls, spurning the general current of ideas and despising the "common herd," have gathered themselves as about a leader, striving to share, perchance to surpass, his glory.

D'Annunzio has passed through several psychological periods, and this evolution in his character is revealed by the evolution in his writings.

"Giovanni Episcopo" his only realistic novel.

To a short period of pure realism belong certain sketches and the novel *Giovanni Episcopo,* his only attempt at a crude rendering of reality, written in equally crude language. It is a narrative of strange events made by the victim of a pitiless fate: a wretched epileptic who, after living for years on the verge of insanity, ends by committing murder.

Giovanni Episcopo speaks in short and rambling phrases. His only child, little Cico, has lately died. "'Yes, he is dead. He has been dead these sixteen days, and I am still in life. But I must soon die too. I must, and very soon. My son is yearning after me. Every night he comes here and sits beside me and looks at me. He comes barefooted, my poor Cico, and I strain my ears to catch his light footfall. All

the time—after dark—I listen for his coming. When he sets his foot on the doorstep it is as if he set it on my heart—but so lightly, without hurting me.'"

At other times the remembrance of his murdered foe drives away all other visions.

"'Did you see the corpse? Was there not something awful in that face . . . . in those eyes? But the eyes were shut. Not both of them—no, not both! . . . . I know I must die that I may be delivered from that impression on my finger of that eyelid that would not close. . . . . I feel it here . . . . always, as if some particle of that skin had stuck to my finger tips.'"

The plot of "Giovanni Episcopo."

Wanzer has excited a weird fascination over Giovanni Episcopo from the day they first met in a miserable boarding-house. It is a fatal spell. Rude, boisterous, and unscrupulous, he has subjugated his timid and more refined companion, but after that quarrel at the table, when Wanzer hurls a dish at Episcopo, the possession is complete.

One night Wanzer orders Episcopo to marry the pretty parlour maid who serves their meals; then he disappears. Under the influence of this hypnotic suggestion Giovanni goes to Tivoli one Sunday and hunts up the servant-girl Ginevra. It is an Easter day, full of sunshine and quiet.

"'We go into the church adorned with consecrated palm branches. She kneels by her sister and opens her prayer-book. As I stand behind her I look at her neck, and the discovery of a little dark mole on her nape gives me an exquisite thrill. At the same moment she slightly turns round, and from the corner of her eye regards me with a sparkling glance.'"

Ginevra accepts the proposal of her unexpected suitor. To secure the parents' consent, he is directed to a wretched building in the worst-famed street in Rome.

An example of D'Annunzio's realism.

"'As I climbed the stairs I heard a door open violently on the landing above, and a torrent of abuse was poured out in a high-pitched feminine voice that reverberated, shrill and piercing, down the stairs. Presently a man slowly came down, or rather crawled along the wall like a flabby thing. He groaned and whimpered under the broad-brimmed hat that flapped over his face. When he brushed past me he lifted his head, and I caught a glimpse of a pair of dark goggles surrounded with network, which protruded over a reddish and sore face very much like a piece of raw meat.'"

This disgusting view of the man he rightly guesses to be the reputed father of his fiancée would have deterred a sane man from pursuing his errand to her degraded mother above, but on Giovanni Episcopo this depravity rather

acts as an allurement, awakening some dormant desire. There is fascination in looking down into the abyss of shame into which he feels that he must fall.

"'From that first evening I felt myself compelled to that marriage. What secret affinity? What foreboding instinct did her father stir in me? Perhaps I was attracted by his vice, and perhaps by his misery, which I guessed to be as hopeless as my own. Wherever I might be he would search me out, would wait for me by day and by night. He never asked anything, nor could he entreat me with his eyes (since they were covered), but if only he turned towards me I understood him. He laughed that foolish convulsive giggle of his, and waited. I could neither withstand him nor shake him off with a cold look or angry word.'"

Disgusting physical and moral details.

With an audacity that not all his mastery of language can redeem, the author lingers on these disgusting descriptions of bodily and mental putrescence. Those sore and bleary eyes, dribbling purulent matter from under the protecting goggles, are not less nasty than the shamelessness of the man, who humbly accepts blows, curses, or money from the mother of children he knows are not his own.

During his engagement Giovanni Episcopo learns the character of his betrothed, but, like an inert thing following its initial impulse, he

proceeds to his doom; the marriage is celebrated.

"'At least a week! I did not ask for a year or a month, but at least a week! No! Nothing! No mercy! She did not even wait a whole day; and from the very first night of our marriage she began to torment me.

"'If I lived a hundred years I could not forget the startling peal of laughter that chilled me in the darkness of our room, mocking my awkwardness and timidity! I could not see her face in the dark, but I realized all the wickedness that rang in that bitter, sneering, shameless, never-before-heard, never-to-be-forgotten laughter. From that moment I knew what a poisonous creature breathed at my side.'"

Episcopo not a truthful conception.

Giovanni's toleration of his wife's shamelessness is disgusting; and when he accepts the earnings of Ginevra's infamy, when even his love for Cico, his son, inspires only maudlin maundering, he ceases to be interesting. Real humanity is always interesting, but a partial representation of humanity, omitting the noble that it may dwell upon the vile, ceases to interest, because it is untrue. As Cico grows older he dimly guesses the shame surrounding him, and somewhat counteracts the evil influence of Wanzer, who has returned after ten years' absence.

Cico sees Wanzer striking his mother and

hears him calling her horrid names; he runs and tells his father. There is compelling power in that sickly, exhausted body, and in his hoarse but firm voice, and Giovanni returns with him. They find the home deserted, and Cico is put to bed, fainting and feverish.

D'Annunzio's dramatic power.

Few passages in D'Annunzio's works are more dramatic than the waiting, in silence and darkness, of these two.

" 'We waited.

" 'Cico was lying back in his bed, and I sat by his side, holding his wrists under my thumbs. His heart-beats were dreadfully fast.

" 'We never spoke, we thought that we were listening intensely to all sorts of noises, whilst we only hearkened to the thumping of our wildly coursing blood.' "

Giovanni has gone in the dark for a glass of water when the latchkey turns in the lock. Stealthily, like a murderer, Wanzer steals in and softly calls Ginevra. Puzzled at the silence and obscurity, he goes into the room where Cico is lying. A shriek from the boy! Giovanni snatches up a long-bladed kitchen knife, and, discerning Cico clutching at Wanzer's hand—the hands of that man on his son!—Giovanni rushes forward and plunges his weapon—two, three, four times—in the back of his foe!

D'Annunzio insists that this study of a pathological case has supplied suggestive data—use-

"Giovanni Episcopo" not a valuable study.

ful information. But the claim is not justified. We never clearly understand Episcopo or his motives, and are disconcerted by contradictory observations. Everywhere the author interferes, illuminating with his own science the confusion in the mind of his protagonist.

A parallel between *Giovanni Episcopo* and Tolstoi's *Kreutzer Sonata* suggests itself. But nothing short of a miracle could have made these two opposed natures meet in the same field and gather the same harvest. A world separates Tolstoi's and D'Annunzio's conceptions of art, and the fact that they have selected similar subjects only implies a common sympathy for a problem which has interested many.

D'Annunzio compared with Tolstoi.

The stern Christian moralist better comprehends the murderer. The great-hearted Russian knows the sinner as his brother, and by the light of love discerns all the tortuous deviations of a blasted but divine soul as well as all the sores and distortions of his worn-out body. D'Annunzio forgets that he is observing a fellow-creature, and imagines that he is engaged in a case of psychological dissection.

Piacere was published in 1889. There are pages in this book to make every modest reader blush; but also there are poetic pages, almost religious in their worship of Beauty.

The three important characters of *Piacere* are Andrea Sperelli, one of the several avatars of

the author himself, Donna Elena Muti, of dangerous beauty and perverse sensuality, and Donna Maria Fleres, a woman of noble heart and high intelligence, whose misfortune it is to fall under the spell of Sperelli.

"Piacere" a prose-poem to Aphrodite.

Piacere is a poem in prose to the goddess Aphrodite, sung by a spirit of the Italian Renaissance in modern language, which a master of the pen compels into rendering shades of emotion, flittering waves of sensation, such as only an ultra-refined sensualist of our present day can experience.

Andrea Sperelli is in his luxurious bachelor's apartment in the Palazzo Zuccari at Rome. Everything in this *buen retiro,* from the roses in the crystal cups to the juniper logs crackling in the antique fireplace, and the silken damask curtains admitting the sunset rays, speaks of sensuous delight.

Andrea Sperelli, the voluptuary.

The beautiful widow who had so unexpectedly separated from Andrea has lately returned to Rome provided with a second husband. She has promised a rendezvous in the rooms that once witnessed their amours. And there this voluptuary sits and soothes his impatience, culling sensation from every surrounding object, with artistic fastidiousness dwelling on these forms and colours that had been partakers in his casual lust and in his intellectual emotion.

For this actor could not enjoy love's play without love's staging.

Elena Muti, type of carnality.

Presently Elena Muti, now Countess of Heathfield, arrives; but she has only come to say that their *liaison* is finished. There is a tender adieu with an accompaniment of tea-making and drinking, of unspoken impulses to half-disguised endearments, more suggestive than the most detailed description.

Elena is but an instrument of pleasure, a soulless thing of beauty; her refusal to betray her husband with Andrea, whilst she accepts another lover, is puzzling.

Sperelli's monstrous character.

Andrea, ever striving after pleasure, passing from one intrigue to another, "carrying on several at the same time, and weaving without scruple a great net of deceptions and lies," heartless, cruel, selfish, false to himself as to every one else, is an attempt to poetize the essentially sordid life of that coterie which arrogates to itself the name of Roman society.

His passion for Elena is psychopathic. It is her chief charm that she is again married, in every sense of the term, with her goatish husband. "When she cried, 'Could you suffer to share me with another?' he felt, 'Why, yes; he could suffer it perfectly.'" Of course to every morally sane person the idea is vile. Does D'Annunzio think so? Hardly! In spite of platitudes about Sperelli's depraved character

he is not really shocked. Rather he admires this "hero," whom elsewhere he tells us "was in truth, the ideal type of the young Italian nobleman of the nineteenth century—a true representative of a race of chivalrous gentlemen and graceful artists, the last scion of an intellectual line." *He is D'Annunzio's ideal gentleman.*

That the lover's pleasure is enhanced by the thought that his mistress shares her favors with her husband is a favourite subject with D'Annunzio. In *Trionfo della Morte,* published five years later than *Piacere,* we find that when the heroine's husband dies she becomes less attractive to her lover.

In the midst of this whirl of futility and corruption, Andrea is wounded in a duel and nearly dies. Then comes that "convalescence which is a purification, a new birth. Never is life so sweet as after the pangs of bodily pain, and never is the human soul so inclined to purity and faith as after glancing down into the abyss of death."

Andrea recovers in his cousin's beautiful villa of Schifanoia. Under the influence of a pure woman's companionship, the daily contact with nature, and breathing the salt sea breeze, his body and mind are both invigorated and purified, though he does not repent according to the conventional formula of reformed rakes. Andrea is still an epicurean; but he has ac- *Sperelli's moral purification.*

quired a higher ideal of happiness, and now craves for nobler and less facile joys.

The starlit night of August, the solemn chant, the harmonious moan of the sea, the veil of silvery mist dissolving in the morning dawn, all the soothing voices of nature, all its hope-inspiring aspects, appeal to his reawakened soul.

Oh, that limpid September sea! Calm and guileless as a sleeping child! It lay outstretched beneath the pearly sky—now green, the delicate and precious green of malachite, the little red sails upon it flickering tongues of fire; now intensely—heraldically—blue, and veined with god-like lapis lazuli, with pictured sails upon it as in a church procession; sails which came crowding like the wings of the cherubim in the background of a Giotto picture.

This sea had for him the attraction of a "mysterious birthplace; he gave himself up to it, trustingly, as a son trusts a loved parent, and there he found comfort, since no one has ever vainly confided his pain, his desire, or his dream to the sea. . . . Something like an indistinct but immense dream blossomed in his soul; something like a streaming veil was lifted, across which the treasure of bliss glimmered."

With this wonderful background of sparkling sea and gorgeous landscape, in this magnificent villa, dignified by the presence of a high-born gentlewoman, everything having combined

for Andrea's purification, Donna Maria Fleres will operate the miracle. Elena impersonated carnal love; Donna Maria, an idealized type of woman's beauty and nobility, appeals to the loftiest chords in Andrea's soul. *Maria Fleres, the idealized woman.*

"This spiritualized creature of election inspired in him a feeling of submission. . . . . His fondest wish was to obey her. By her, more than by any other woman, he wanted to be praised and understood in his intellectual and artistic aspirations, in the noblest part of his life. His ambition was to possess her heart."

Beautiful is the frame for this spiritual love! On the flowered terraces, under the classical shadow of centennial oaks, in the luxuriant underwood of the park, in the clearing on which a quadrifrons Hermes presides, away from all the vulgarity of commonplace life, protected by the presence of their kind hostess, the two loving souls mingle their bliss.

"'You have looked at me, spoken, answered, smiled; you have sat by me in silence and thought; you have lived by my side that inaccessible, unseen existence which I know not and can never know; and your soul has possessed me unconsciously, as the sea absorbs a river. . . . . Pity, coming from you, would be sweeter to me than the love of any other woman. Your hand, resting on my heart, would recall a purer and stronger youth.'" *The love of Sperelli and Maria.*

The fall of Sperelli. When they return to town the spell is broken. Andrea plunges once more into the fashionable turmoil, and continually meets Elena, the belle of this fast set. The embers of his old passion blaze with added ardour because of her unchastity. Yet Andrea still makes love to Maria! This man whose soul was so recently cleansed!

It is impossible to resume in plain prose this immoral situation! All D'Annunzio's eloquence and gorgeous images fail to make it tolerable! "'Yesterday,'" says Sperelli, "'a grand scene of passion, almost ending in tears; to-day, a little episode of mute sensuality. And I seemed to myself as sincere in my sentiment yesterday as I was in my sensation to-day. Added to which, scarcely an hour before Elena's kiss, I had a moment of lofty lyrical emotion at Donna Maria's side. . . . . To-morrow, most assuredly, I shall begin the same game over again.'"

His intrigues with Elena and Maria. He stimulates both their jealousies, and smiles when he thinks that the success of one adventure may pave his way to the other. Then his dilettantism suggests comparisons.

"'That voice! How strangely Elena's intonations sounded on Donna Maria's lips.' A mad thought flashed suddenly on him. 'That voice could become the element of a fantastical creation! Because of this affinity he might blend these two beauties! And possess in his

imagination a third one, more complex, more perfect, and more true, because ideal!'"

This double current of morbid desire is presented in a number of images of perverse beauty. One characteristic scene, showing both the unnatural content and the masterful adornment of form, is that midnight drive to the gates of Palazzo Barberini, where, in a closed brougham half filled with white roses, Andrea waits the promised rendezvous with Elena.

"The atmosphere seemed pregnant with unsubstantial milk, all objects, existent as in the incorporealism of a dream, looked shadowy images of meteors, visible only from afar, through a chimerical irradiance of their shapes. The snow covered all the gate, concealing the iron, weaving a masterful embroidery more delicate and flimsy than filigree work, upheld by the colossal statues muffled in snow, as a cobweb is stretched between two oak-trees. They appeared like a motionless thicket of ghostly lilies, a spot hushed by a moonshiny spell, a lifeless Paradise of Silence."

Though Andrea discerns all the exquisite beauty of the moment, he questions which of the two women he would prefer to see coming towards him in this fantastic scenery: whether Elena in purple robes, or Maria wrapped in ermine. The purity of the night, the whiteness of the snow and moonshine plead for Donna

Maria, and, Elena having been detained beyond the appointed time, Andrea drives to the Piazza del Quirinale, past Donna Maria's house, adjoining the magnificent Aldobrandini gardens. There, with ancient Rome lying in solemn grandeur as a background, Andrea lays his harvest of roses, like an homage, in front of Donna Maria's door.

The seduction of Maria Fleres.

When Elena rejects Andrea for another man, and when for other and more shameful reasons he should turn from her in disgust, his perverse desire grows more morbidly violent. Though her image is ever before his eyes, his passionate pleadings persuade poor Maria to become his mistress. The same room where once Elena made and drank tea witnesses a repetition of the same scene with Donna Maria. And then Andrea commits the vile sacrilege of loving one woman in the arms of another. In the dark he hides his face on Maria's breast and bids her speak to him, that he may hear the voice that is like Elena's. But suddenly . . . . the death-blow comes crashing on this deluded victim. In the ecstasy of passionate caresses Andrea has uttered the name of Elena!

Sperelli becomes insane.

This last phase of Andrea's immorality is a revolting type of *psychopathia sexualis*. To deliberately seduce a noble and pure woman that through their mutual endearments he might enjoy the perverse volupty of another woman's

caresses! It is not a pardonable subject for a novel. Yet D'Annunzio's disapproval is perfunctory. This alluring idea is again reflected in *Le Vergini delle Rocce,* published seven years later, where it requires the love of three sisters to satisfy the erotic "hero."

Nenciani's criticism on D'Annunzio.

The Italian critic, Signor Nenciani, after praising the exquisite style of this novel, concludes: "I can only hope that the poet who has written these pages will henceforth use his marvellous powers in describing less exceptional and more genial episodes of life. . . . . Leave," he cries, "leave forever the study of such morbid, exceptional, and artificial personages."

"Il Trionfo della Morte."

Il Trionfo della Morte did not create as great a sensation as did *Piacere.* The readers who expected a crescendo of pornography were disappointed, and D'Annunzio's disciples had not yet sufficient authority to sway public opinion, which held aloof, dismayed by his unconventional æsthetic and ethic theories.

The story of one mind, or, rather, the evolution of one idea in one mind, by means of scenes of sensation—that is *Il Trionfo della Morte.*

An artist predisposed by heredity and sexual debauch to the insanity which leads to suicide; an interpretation of the sights and emotions that urge him onwards, all told with such incomparable power as to compel even the most prejudiced

A work of great power.

reader to consent to emotions and feelings of which he would be ashamed when not under the spell, make up the book. It opens and ends with a suicide, and contains funerals and death-scenes; yet there is such beauty of description, such idealizing of even sorrow and pain, that the book is not lugubrious.

A group of Roman loafers, discussing a suicide just then committed from the towering wall of the Pincio, is the prelude. Then, without further preface, we are admitted into the intimacy of the lovers. Even in these first months of his *liaison* Giorgio torments himself and his mistress with vague doubts.

Giorgio and Ippolita.

"'How much of your being can I call mine?'

"'The whole.'

"'No; nothing, or next to nothing. . . . . Like every living creature, you carry a whole world within you, and no amount of passion can break open for me the gates of this world. Only the smallest part of your feelings, sentiments, and thoughts come within my knowledge. You cannot give me your soul. Even while I kiss your brow there may be lurking under that brow a thought that is not of me. . . . . The communion of feeling between us both is suddenly snapped, and in the ecstasy of caresses I feel chilled and lonely.'

"'Why thus spoil one's pleasure?' says Ip-

polite. 'You pick your thoughts to pieces . . . . you think too much.'" She does not understand her lover's ailment, but she tries to comfort him, and agrees to his proposal that they quit Rome for a short pleasure trip. *Giorgio, the sceptic.*

The serene beauty of the Albano landscape and the presence of the loved one soothes the restless spirit of this sceptic epicurean, and whilst they wander about the wooded hills or cosily sit and chat by a crackling fire, Giorgio enjoys a short reprieve. After three weeks of this honeymooning they return to Rome, and Ippolita promises Giorgio to spend the summer and autumn with him in some out-of-the-world nook, and there together find a cure for his moral disease.

The second book is an interlude; in a different key.

Giorgio Aurispa is summoned to the family homestead in the midst of wild Abruzzi. He is surrounded by strange, unsympathetic people, living the belittling, soul-crushing existence of a quarrelsome and impoverished family. *The Aurispa family: a realistic study.*

By a reversion of his early realistic manner D'Annunzio describes these rude, uncouth people, their violent passions, hereditary diseases, and hopeless intellectual and moral misery with realism that gives high relief and colouring to their episodic figures. His object, obviously, was to so represent the immediate family and

Not convincing as a study in heredity.

ancestors of Aurispa as to show that his moral and physical characteristics were hereditary. But the author fails of his object. The figure of Giorgio, at first shadowy and unlovable, then puzzling and disgusting, acquires neither consistency nor clearness for participating in these high-coloured sketches.

The continual provocation of her husband's infidelity, and the comparative poverty resulting from it, has turned Giorgio's once pleasant-tempered and refined mother into a shrill-voiced, coarse-speaking old woman. In a farmhouse close by his father leads a shameless life with a concubine and several bastard children.

Aunt Gioconda, a strange figure.

A strange figure in the Aurispa household is Aunt Gioconda, the elderly, half-insane, lame, and bigoted sister of Giorgio's father.

"Stout, of that unwholesome flabby fatness which she owed to her sedentary life and to the constant observance of devotional practices, she sighed her life away in the monotony of prayer-mumbling and the endurance of self-imposed denials of her tormenting greediness. She was so fond of sweetmeats that she turned in disgust from any other food; yet she had often to do without."

Giorgio's sister, Cristina, is a fragile, sensitive creature with whom he can sympathize better than with the others. She frets and worries over her sickly child, whose drooping head,

emaciated body, and rickety limbs are described *ad nauseam.*

Stronger in his influence over Giorgio than his living relatives is Demetrio, the uncle who has bequeathed a fortune to him after having been his companion and intellectual guide. "Tall, slender, and slightly stooping, with his head thrown back and the characteristic white lock of hair falling over his brow. His violin was in his hand. He ran his fingers through his hair, just above his ear, with a gesture that was peculiar to him; he tuned his instrument, rubbed his bow with rosin, and the sonata began." *Uncle Demetrio.*

Giorgio playing the accompaniment, these two kindred souls would soar together in the realm of melody, into those regions of dreamland that are only disclosed to the chosen few who, like D'Annunzio, possess that golden wing of poetry which hovers midway between heaven and earth. Giorgio lives over again those long hours of fond intimacy when he and Demetrio revelled in the music of their favourite masters; he recalls the agonizing hours of the death vigil, and strange images and desires of death rise in his soul. *His influence over Giorgio.*

"His eyes wandered to the case of pistols, and a long-dormant thought now flashed out like an electric spark: 'I too shall kill myself with one of these pistols, with the same one—on

the same bed!'. . . . The roots of his hair stirred, he shuddered to the depths of his being as on the tragic day when he uncovered the dead face and fancied that he could distinguish through the bandages the horrible ravage caused by the firearm. . . . . By a sudden transposition of fancy it was himself he now saw stretched upon the couch."

The instinct of self-preservation suggests the word "Ippolita," and he conquers this temptation.

The third volume the best of D'Annunzio's prose.

The third volume is the best of all D'Annunzio's prose writings. It is the *Andante Con Variazioni,* into which the masters of symphony poured the treasure of their virtuosity and gave free vent to their phantasy. As an interpretation of nature it lacks comprehension, but in the abundance of images, in the unparalleled perfection of style, and in poetical spontaneity, it is a masterpiece.

Aurispa and Ippolita at San Vito.

Giorgio prepares for Ippolita's arrival in San Vito. Five country lasses are gathering flowered broom, with which all the way will be strewn to welcome home the *Signora;* they sing sweetly as they stand knee-deep in the golden wave of blossoms. Then Ippolita arrives, breathing deep with emotion, intoxicated by this sovereign homage, this dewy glory stretched along her path.

"'Everything here is so delightful!' she ex-

claimed, and, taking up the big round loaf, warm from the oven, she inhaled its odour with intense enjoyment.

"'Oh, what a good smell!' And with a childish greed she broke off a bit of the swelling crust, biting into it with her strong, white teeth. Every movement of her sinuous lips expressed her enjoyment, while her whole person seemed to exhale such a perfume of pure grace that Giorgio was fascinated and surprised as by some unexpected novelty. 'Try it—taste how good it is!' She held out to him the bread in which the marks of her white teeth glistened moistly, and she pressed it to his lips, her laugh drawing him within the spell of her joy."

This bread thus shared in a communion of joy and love Giorgio interprets as the beginning of a new union.

Idealization of country life.

Every simple scene of country life is exalted into a symbolic myth, every spectacle of nature is gilt with a halo of poetic beauty. The reapers in the field, meeting to sing their farewell hymns, have the graceful majesty of an antique chorus when their hearty cheers are echoed back by the hills to the cliffs, and the last rays of the setting sun flash upon steel sickles, and the sheaf atop of every stack stands up like a golden plume.

"'Blessed be the women that sing sweet songs as they bring in the jars of old wine!' was the last of many such blessings. There was

D'Annunzio's classic spirit.

a roar of delight as they turned round and perceived the band of women drawing near, bringing the last bounties to the reaped fields. They advanced in a double file, carrying large, painted jars of wine upon their arms; and they sang as they walked. Through the olive groves, as through a colonnade upon a background of glittering sea, they appeared like one of those votive processions, so harmoniously worked in bas-relief on the frieze of a temple or round the bases of sarcophagi."

In the same classic spirit and serene beauty many a picture is evoked.

His perception of the spirit of music.

The eye and the soul of a painter or sculptor have inspired many passages, but there are others in which the spirit of music, the mysterious significance of sounds, the complex beauty of harmony, are so well perceived that we proclaim D'Annunzio above all a musician.

The interpretation of Wagner's *Tristan and Iseult* is an elaborate prose poem which shows this natural gift, and is so charming that we are loth to confess that it is not the true interpretation or the exact appreciation of the subtle philosophy and mystical spell of this abstruse music. Other pages of the song of the waves, the low sucking sound of the ebb, "like a flock of sheep drinking in at a stream," or "the blithe and lusty uproar of the flood coming from the open main," and all the endless variety of

rhythms and moods, the infinite gamut of sounds, measures, and stops that majestic ocean pours into his attentive ears, are evidence of an uncommon power for listening to and interpreting the voice of Nature.

"The waves would drive on towards the massive shore with all the vehemence of love and anger, dashing upon it with a roar, spreading over it, foaming, gurgling, invading its most secret recesses. It was as if some imperial soul in Nature were breathing its frenzy into a vast, many-voiced instrument, striking all its chords, touching its every key of joy or sorrow."

Aurispa's morbid fear of death.

In Giorgio's unsettled, overstrung mind every emotion turns to poisonous food, alimental of his craze; the idea of music, far from soothing his unrest, becomes suggestive of death.

"Music had initiated Demetrio into the mystery of death, had revealed to him the secret world of marvels that lies beyond the bourne of life. Harmony, an element superior to time and space, will help the individual mind to cast off the trammels that bind him to this world, and confine him, as in a prison, within the limits of his personality, in perpetual subjection to the base elements of his fleshly substance."

Vainly does Giorgio Aurispa struggle against this haunting idea of death. Religion is powerless, at least his religion, which is but a sensual

Michetti's "Voto" inspired by D'Annunzio.

worship. The lovers join in a pilgrimage to a miraculous Madonna, thus affording descriptions of beauty and power so vivid as to have inspired that most characteristic painting in the Roman *Galleria d'Arte Moderna*—the *Voto,* by Michetti. They mix with the fanatics howling and weeping at the shrine; they gaze on the awful sights of human misery before The Blessed Intercessor, and feel only terror and disgust. The most profane love mingles with Aurispa's mysticism when he can evoke the image of the Rose of Hell, the Enemy—Ippolita—"casting aside, like a robe, all her sin, and stepping, chaste and pure, into a darksome chapel at the foot of a sacrificial altar. Become luminous herself, she lights up the sacred gloom.

Ippolita becomes "the Enemy" to Aurispa.

On the summit of a marble candelabra she stands and burns in the silent, unextinguishable flame of her love. And there she will burn in self-devouring fire, never claiming any return from the Beloved One (*Amabat amare*), renouncing forever all possession: more transcendental in her sovereign purity than God himself, because if God loves His creatures He wills to be loved in return. Woe to him who refuses!"

Giorgio Aurispa—or, rather, D'Annunzio—speaks of faith as a blind man speaks of colours. Does he even understand the law of human love? Neither the woman who holds him by

the chain of desire, nor the miserable wretches, cripples, agonizingly sick and dying, whom he describes with such consummate art, ever call forth a heartfelt expression of pity. Were D'Annunzio indeed a psychologist, he would know that it is emptiness of heart, even more than inherited insanity, which urges Giorgio towards suicide as a release from a life which has come to be only a vain search for pleasure.

D'Annunzio understands neither faith nor love.

Aurispa determines the death of Ippolita. He will drown her when they bathe together in the sea. Yet, when he has enticed her far enough from the shore to effect his purpose, his courage fails him.

Aurispa attempts to murder Ippolita.

"Instinctively he caught at those convulsively clutching hands. . . . . The brutal instinct of self-preservation infused fresh vigour into him. With a strenuous effort he accomplished the short distance, bearing her weight, and reached the rock exhausted."

Immediately he regrets his weakness, and indulges in insane imaginations. "He imagined her doomed, lying under the water, and he imagined his own emotion on seeing her sink, and then the signs of grief he would exhibit to the public, and also his attitude when confronted with the corpse."

This woman he now considers as the "Enemy," as the embodiment of those baser instincts which bind his spirit to the earth.

Aurispa's end psychologically true.

Life is intolerable with her and without her, and the final scene is but the last paroxysm of a distempered mind translating haunting thoughts into deeds.

In the words of another, *"Nec sine te nec tecum vivere possum,"* the epigraph upon the French translation expresses, if we add to it the *"Odi et amo"* of Catullus, that tragedy of desire unsatisfied in satisfaction, yet eternal in desire, which is perhaps the most profound tragedy in which the human soul can become entangled. *Antony and Cleopatra, Tristan and Iseult*—surely nothing new could be said on the subject of those two supreme masterpieces. But D'Annunzio has said something new. It is not Antony who is "so ravished and enchanted of the sweet poison" of the love of Cleopatra, nor Tristan who "chooses to die that he may live in love" for the sake of Iseult. No! it is not these whom D'Annunzio shows us; but two shadows, who are the shadows of whatever in humanity flies to the lure of earthly love.

The tragedy of "Trionfo della Morte."

The shadowy reality of Aurispa and Ippolita.

Just because they are so shadowy, because they may seem to be so unreal, they have another, nearer, more insidious kind of reality than that reality by which Antony is so absolutely Antony, Tristan so absolutely heroic love. These live in themselves with so intense a personal or tragic life that they are forever outside us; but the lovers of the *Trionfo della Morte*

might well be myself, you, everyone who has ever desired the infinity of emotion, the infinity of surrender, the finality of possession. They have the desires and dangers and possible ecstasies and possible disasters which are common to all lovers who have loved without limitation and without wisdom.

False psychology of "Trionfo della Morte."

In the *Trionfo della Morte* we have the best and the worst of D'Annunzio. His psychology gives an impression of truth, even though it will not stand investigation, and his descriptive power has been seldom more splendidly displayed. Granted that D'Annunzio's philosophy is false, that his knowledge of the human heart is superficial, that he perceives only a half of the truth. Yet so forcibly does he present that half-truth, there is such a master in the poet, such an aptitude for seeing, hearing, and feeling beauty, harmony, and volupty; such a skill for rendering all these complex sensations and ordering them in gorgeous pictures of startling effect, or in sketches of infinite delicacy, that this novel will rank among those works which can be discussed but not ignored by whoever would follow the progress of modern novel writing.

D'Annunzio's great art.

Tullio Hermil, the principal character in the *Innocente,* is the least shadowy of D'Annunzio's personages, and the plot in this novel is better developed than in his others; whilst a moral

The "Innocente."

thesis is proposed. Has a betrayed husband the right to kill the offspring of his sinful wife? No philosopher with balanced mind would ever seriously propound and discuss such a thesis. But then D'Annunzio is neither a philosopher nor has he a well-balanced intellect.

Excepting *Le Vergini delle Rocce*, all D'Annunzio's novels are dramas enacted by two personages. In *Innocente* the two are man and wife, Tullio and Giuliana Hermil. Tullio is capable of every crime: a sybarite and a voluptuary, with uncontrolled will and egoistic soul.

Tullio Hermil.

Un homme à femmes—that is, a man with power over women, because he fights them with their own weapons, and overcomes them through knowledge and sympathy with both their weakness and their strength. Equal to them in shrewdness and in sensibility, he masters them because his own emotions are always under calculating control. He is never betrayed into that rush of genuine emotion which so often brings to naught a woman's cleverest plotting.

The novel opens with Hermil's cynical confession that he has for years been grossly unfaithful to his wife and inflicting on her exquisite pain. He prides himself on having sometimes felt pity for his victim, yet his wife's sufferings add zest to his own debauch. "To

be forever faithless to a faithful woman" represents his ideal of happiness.

His wife, Giuliana, is a sweet little thing, passive, refined, and timid. Bodily weakness and carnal attraction are her chief characteristics, the strings by which the master moves this puppet. When her husband honours her with some token of desire she forgives him; and when she does fall, it is rather a case of passive submission to another will than revolt against her wrongs. *Guiliana Hermil.*

With unexpected delicacy and discernment D'Annunzio has left in shadow this exceptional moment in Giuliana's life, this strange fact of a pure and loving woman's almost passive surrender and immediate recovery of her self-possession. Giuliana, a devoted wife, a loving slave, a smiling victim, idealized by physical and moral suffering, much resembles an antique victim of fate. Like a Phædra or an Andromache of ancient Greece, she is the toy of perverse deities. Her love for her husband is something more or less than a feeling—it is a spell.

She will die to save him pain, though she knows him unfaithful—she is his mistress rather than his wife—and such is his power over her soul that he not only suggests the unnatural wish to see her babe die, but makes her pray for this death! This is shocking, absurd, ineffective.

Tullio Hermit contrasted with Tolstoi's Nikita.

Tullio Hermil has been conceived under the influence of Tolstoi and Dostoievsky. Like Nikita in the *Powers of Darkness* he has killed an innocent babe, and like him, he cries out that he wants to confess his guilt; but here the likeness ends. The difference is the difference between two schools of art, between two consciences. Nikita is a slow-witted brute, and like a brute he acts, and kills atrociously. We hear the creaking of the little bones smashed under a board. And yet this brute has a soul, and presently it will be roused into action.

Careless of consequence to himself or to others, he cries out his confession to God and man, in blind instinctive craving for justice.

Tullio Hermil's insensate self-love decides the child's fate. Only himself, his property, his happiness is threatened by the little bastard; but since his ego is the pivot of his world he pronounces sentence.

There is nothing of the impulsive brute in Tullio Hermil; he does not act with needless cruelty, or court danger. Since he hates bloodshed and scandal, he will commit this murder delicately. Exposure to the biting night wind must prove fatal to the sleeping babe, yet leave no telltale trace behind.

His confession, too, is utterly different from Nikita's. Far from desiring that justice be done—at his own expense—he rehearses the

crime with cynical pride in his own acuteness, with a lingering pleasure over the voluptuous joys of the past. He prides himself with having sometimes felt the emotion of pity, but the idea of forgiving his "faithless wife" does not even occur to him.

D'Annunzio has failed to catch the soul-awakening Tolstoian inspiration. Has he been more successful in presenting the precepts of the positivist criminal school, so much in vogue in Italy?

Hermil not a lifelike criminal.

Tullio Hermil may have been planned on the pattern of the born criminal, such as Cesare Lombroso has fixed it; or he may have been copied from some other type of criminality; but there is something amiss in the copy; he is not lifelike.

Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, before they were analyzed by scholars, had impressed thousands with an appalling sense of their likelihood. Daily experience suffices to explain the murder of Polonius, and Macbeth's hallucination. We know that there are some unhappy wretches born with a tendency to commit crimes—or, rather, abnormal actions—and we also know that certain unfavorable circumstances will combine to urge them on, almost fatally; we know these things, but we do not desire to remember them when reading a book of fiction. The novel is not intended as a text-book of science.

Hermil is psychologically valueless.

Moreover, D'Annunzio fails to observe the first dogma of criminology, which is direct observation. Hermil's moral figure is evidently not a study from life. It is, therefore, ineffective and psychologically valueless.

"Since I am a being different from any other, and since I have a concept of life different from any other man's, I have a right to shake off those duties which other people would lay on me. I have a right to scorn opinion, and live in the absolute sincerity of my elect nature."

The most striking part of the book, the crime itself, is described with great vigour.

Characteristics of "Innocente."

This novel is the least D'Annunzian, hence the least satisfactory of its author's novels. There are fewer descriptions of natural beauty, and more of commonplace life, than in any other.

The landscapes seen across such complex emotions of the personages are blurred, and the many long passages describing Giuliana's ailments—her confinement, the surgical preparations, and the details of sick-nursing—do not add to the interest of the book, though they evidence painstaking writing. The subordinate characters are conventional and stiff.

"Le Vergini delle Rocce."

Of all D'Annunzio's novels, *Le Vergini delle Rocce* is the most characteristic and original. As he has found no model for such a prose poem, so he will find no imitator. The gifts

required to make such an attempt successful are too multiple and too diverse to tempt a writer to a repetition. Here the poet shows his measure; as a novelist, the artist appears in possession of peculiar powers, and the thinker puts forth a complete theory.

D'Annunzio as spiritual heir to Da Vinci.

In the Prologue of this romance, *The Virgins of the Hills,* D'Annunzio presumes to introduce himself as the spiritual heir and successor of Leonardo da Vinci—a claim as insistently urged by his disciples as by himself.

They will tell you that though doubtless the environment of his characters, their stage setting, is the Italy of to-day, that though in the beauty of his style D'Annunzio is the most modern of Italian writers, and has revealed to us new and unsuspected possibilities and beauties of expression, and that though his men and women wear the latest London and Paris fashions, yet if we separate these characters from their environment and from the extreme modernity of language in which they speak and are described, we are conscious that in their spiritual significance, in what they really think and feel, they are copied from models centuries old. And this is true!

D'Annunzio's retroversion to antique models.

That D'Annunzio has achieved a certain success in this retroversion, is shown by the stiffness and simplicity of his creations, by his limited power of psychic investigation, by his

indifference to the insistent social and economic problems that are now attracting general attention, and his lack of sympathy for his fellow men, which he thinks it clever to exaggerate, as an affected contempt for the "Great Beast," the mass of humanity.

But how insufficient a foundation on which to assume the mantle of Leonardo da Vinci, and proclaim himself the heir and successor of that complete and illustrious representative of the *Quattrocento!*

Humanism the expression of the Renaissance.

The literary expression of the Renaissance is Humanism It signifies a conception of life opposed to mediæval mysticism; it is the cry of mingled joy and surprise rising from the hearts of men who had just then turned their eyes away from the contemplation of a mysterious heaven, to gaze on the tangible beauty of the world; men who delighted in the newly recovered treasures of antiquity, and expressed themselves with a delightful mingling of simplicity and pendantry, of mythology and reality, of delicacy and coarseness, known as the style of the rude and grand fourteenth century.

Characteristics of the Renaissance.

In those times the hearts of men were swollen with pride for having sundered the fetters of Church absolutism, and in the consciousness of strength and moral independence great actions were accomplished; great for good and for evil,

but prompted by a feeling which cannot be reëvoked by an exhausted, sceptic, overgrown modern soul. In those times even the alterations in the meaning of words betrayed this uncurbed, irrepressible impulse towards the triumph of humanity over natural forces, and of the individual over the mass.

Thus the word VIRTUE was used in the Ciceronian sense of valour, thus the word ANTIQUE was often used as the equivalent of grandly beautiful. This joy in the present, this pride in the past, and this confidence in the future of human nature was genuine, unquestioned, and it broke forth in strong though sometimes rude expressions, with an abundance of words, and an over-ornament of style, which we would now vainly attempt to imitate, because we lack the spontaneitv of feeling that was thus expressed.

D'Annunzio not the heir of the Renaissance.

Of all modern writers, who less than D'Annunzio possesses the genuine inspiration, the undaunted impulse, the simplicity of exulting joy, which were the essential traits of the Renaissance? Is he not rather an heir of the mannerisms and adorned vacuity of those Renaissance imitators, the *Seicentists?*

Compared with Leonardo da Vinci.

From Leonardo he borrowed the formula "A natural thing seen in an ample mirror," but though he has the artistic eye and the artistic ability, he lacks the ample mirror of a compre-

hensive soul to translate its mystic meaning. There is something of Leonardo's manner in the picture of these three Maiden Princesses, but little of his spirit. Yes! Leonardo might have painted this fantastic Garden with the Virgins: Massimilla sitting on a stone bench, with fingers clasped round her knee; Violante standing "under an archway of green, her feet on the grass . . . . offering to my amazed look her whole beauty in that calm attitude, under the green portico"; and Anatolia coming down towards the visitors and putting out her hand, "with a gesture of virile simplicity." But if Leonardo had painted this picture he must have made it suggestive of such thought as is suggested in the enigmatic smile on the lips of his *Gioconda*. The symbols which are so vague and indistinct in D'Annunzio that the reader soon wearies of the puzzle, would with Leonardo have presented a profound meaning, and recalled as many thoughts as images. But then Leonardo was Leonardo, a creator of ideas, and D'Annunzio is a painter of images.

"The Virgins" the representation of Dream.

The Virgins of the Hills is indeed a masterpiece if considered as a prose poem and not as a novel; not a representation of Life, but a representation of Dream. The very unreality and vagueness of this poetical evocation is the mystic veil which conceals the weakness of conception, the clumsiness of development, the

inconsistent philosophy and uncertain psychology, which a background of modern manners and customs would have revealed.

Deities, earth-bubbles, impersonations of virtues, forms of beauty and grace made of dream stuff; unfettered by natural limitations, ignorant of the laws that control ordinary mortals, such are the three Maiden Princesses that have appeared to Claudio Cantelmo in a vision even before his eye had seen them. Nothing they do or say can startle us when once we understand their natures. These impossible figures of a dream assume an air of naturalness which only waking reality dispels.

The castle, the landscape, the glory of spring blossoming, the music of reawakening waters—all these and many more apparitions of beauty and harmony give purely æsthetic emotions, in which neither our discernment, nor our prosaic experience of life, nor our moral sense are called to interfere. If they do interfere, of course they must protest. But why ask this "thing of Beauty" to be either true to reality, or good, in accord with a standard with which it was not meant to be measured? Accept then this poetic medley, these visions, this echo of feelings and emotions, for what it is—a new species of literary composition that had no model, and probably will have no imitator.

Not only is this work exceptional in the

"The Virgins" an exceptional success.

history of novel writing, but it is exceptional in the production of its author. He has so often blundered, he has so often strayed from his intellectual domain of poetical interpretation, he has so often been tempted into the stony paths of physiology and psychology, that he should be congratulated on this.

Cantelmo's vision of the Virgins.

In a prophetic vision Claudio Cantelmo has seen the three Maiden Princesses who live in the seclusion of their ancient castle of Trigento, in the double gloom of ruin and threatening insanity, and they have spoken to him, allured him with the magic of mystery! Massimilla's spirit has revealed to Claudio's her unquenchable craving for submission. "I am she who listens and admires in silence. . . . . On my lips is stamped the invisible form of the word Amen." Anatolia's heart is "glowing with the tenderness that could save thousands of despairing creatures." "I possess the two supreme gifts that make life grand and immortal, even beyond the illusion of death. I am not afraid of suffering and I feel on my thoughts and acts the seal of Eternity." Of Violante the poets have sung that "in the lines of her flesh is the mystery of Beauty revealed. . . . . She is the perfect effigy of the Idea which earth-born people have confusedly known by intuition, and which artists have evoked, without ceasing, in their sym-

phonies and poems, on the canvas and in the clay."

The allegory of "The Virgins."

Now if we understand these three sisters to be impersonations of Faith, Love, and Beauty, we need not be shocked at Cantelmo's behaviour towards them; when, after being introduced into their ancestral castle, he first flatters, then dispels the hopes of Violante, seduces Massimilla from her dream of celestial devotion, to grant him her love, which he does not condescend to accept; and lastly offers his preference to Anatolia, the strong and beauteous virgin, whom he deems fit to bear the heroic son who shall continue the antique race.

It presents a complete æsthetic emotion.

There is and there could be no conclusion to this poem in prose; yet when we reach the last page of the volume we have the sensation of having enjoyed a complete æsthetic emotion, as after an exhausting visit to a gallery of pictures, we are drunk with Beauty. We may have received no intellectual food, but all our nerves are quivering with the accumulated delights. There is almost no aspect of Beauty that has not here been evoked; from the pure lines of feminine perfection to the intoxicating outburst of flowered Spring, the reawakened life in a long-shut-up fountain, and the symphony of water, the grandeur of majestic and gloomy hills, the bracing, breezy mountain landscape, and the silent poetic lark disappearing under

And an evocation of Beauty.

the white blossoms. Translations and quotations cannot render the charm of these jewels of word-painting.

"Il Fuoco" embodies a genuine soul.

In the latest of D'Annunzio's novels, *Il Fuoco,* he has for the first time described a living soul—a soul that is not an echo of his own. Foscarina is a real woman, and her love for Stelio Effrena a genuine passion: a blending of spiritual worship and carnal desire, of humility and of pride, of devotion and of jealousy, which, while it inspires other things, is also capable of inspiring the noblest deeds. "She felt herself capable of suffering all the transfigurations that it should please the Life-Giver to work in her for the satisfaction of his own constant desire for poetry and for beauty." "Her spirit became concave, like a chalice, to receive the wave of his thoughts."

And such is the vivifying influence of this sincere emotion that the whole book, which otherwise would be as shadowy and artificial as *The Virgins of the Hills,* is quickened into a living reality. This love of Foscarina, the great actress, for the poet Effrena stops at no sacrifice—not even to the greatest, which is renunciation. This intensity of passion, this soul-struggle before she can accept her fate, stamp the figure of Foscarina with a dramatic grandeur that reverberates all through the book.

Besides being a story of passion, *Fuoco* is, as

is *The Virgins,* a Dream of Beauty. A dream of youth, of day-dawn, of springtime, and purity in the latter; and in *Fuoco* a vision of glorious sunset, of autumn, of the city, and the woman radiant with the mellowed lustre of maturity. "The city and the woman both deep and tempting and wearied with many loves, both overmagnified by his dreams and fated to delude his expectations." Venice, the dream of poets, has never been sung with so complete comprehension of her manifold beauties.

"Il Fuoco" a Dream of Beauty.

He sees the "golden magic bridge stretching out over a sea of light and silver to some infinite dream of beauty"; under "the motionless fires of a summer sky she seemed pulseless and breathless, dead indeed in her green waters," while "the inverted goblet of the sky poured down a dream of splendor," reflecting quivering images in a fluid world of water. "The magnificent City of Temptation, in whose canals, as in the veins of a voluptuous woman, the fever of night is kindling. . . . . The Molo and the twofold miracle of porticoes open to the popular applause . . . . the Riva, unfolding its gentle arch towards the shadowy gardens and the fertile islands." The church "cupolas are swollen by prayers," the cross atop conceals joy as the "grape in its first blossom conceals the wine," and a palace in the morning twilight "has an

D'Annunzio depicts the tangible beauty of Venice.

aerial appearance, as of a painted cloud laid on the waters."

Those admirable pages wherein he describes the glorious twilight on the lagoons, or a summer sky "stretching like a magic hedge of gold" with a sea of light and of silence mirroring the golden stars below; as we view with him the "summit of the naked town which rose like a magic cry," and enjoy "that silent music of motionless lines," and delight in that harmony of "golden bunches and purple figs," and the "blue-green shadows," and the monotony of "the oar measuring the silence," his "devotion for sensitive hands" and "voluptuous hair" substantiate the poet's claim.

But fails to apprehend its significance.

But when from descriptions of these tangible forms of beauty he strives to rise to a higher conception of their essence, D'Annunzio is less convincing. For him the secret of art is to ascend "by the power of joy" to superior forms of life, and he despises those "who were sterilized by a resigned mourning," forgetting Leonardo's aphorism: "Where there is more sentiment there is more pain."

Of himself Effrena says that "in Venice he cannot feel except in music, and he cannot think except in images." He had accomplished in himself the "intimate marriage of art with life, and he thus found in the depths of his own substance a spring of perennial harmonies."

Stelio Effrena the mouthpiece of D'Annunzio.

Stelio Effrena is, like all the heroes of D'Annunzio, the mouthpiece by which he expresses his own ideas, and that image of himself which he would reveal to the public. Indeed, the names of Gabbriele D'Annunzio and Eleonora Duse might as well be written in full, so transparent is the disguise, so complacently is the secret revealed.

The most ignoble of his heroes.

Now, there could have been no more unfortunate choice, for though D'Annunzio has not created one single noble man in his books, there are varying degrees to their ignobleness, and, in his way, Stelio Effrena is the most despicable. All of D'Annunzio's men are self-centered, egoistic, but Stelio's egoism surpasses them all. All are unchivalric in their treatment of women, but Effrena is the most unchivalric of them all. Verily, our soul rises in wrath at the repeated pictures of this hothouse poet-lover, this little tin god, sitting enthroned and smilingly benignant, or condescendingly extending his hand to the sweetheart whom he for the moment may prefer, and who humbly offers him on bended knees the incense of her love and passion!

Does this man know what knighthood means! When he grants, as a favor, that *la Foscarina* shall leave him in the arms of another woman while she goes begging through the world for money to build his theatre!

We have in novels many characters with

The egoism of Effrena.

colossal egoism, characters which their creators designed should be laughed at or detested, as if their authors should say: "There, have I not imagined the most absurdly ridiculous character of which you can think?" But the creator of Stelio Effrena, though he has certainly succeeded beyond his wildest imaginings in creating just such a character, as certainly has not intended to do so. In effect, he has attempted to present to us a great genius, a wonderful lover, and then in a stage whisper to tell us: "That is I—Gabbriele D'Annunzio!"

And of D'Annunzio.

And with what stupendous vanity is he endowed! What monumental complacency! This Stelio, for whom art and nature, man and woman, and Venice itself, were created to do him reverence, and to reveal his greatness! The pages are one succession of "I," "I," "I and my disciples." Truly this genius does not hide his shrinking personality, unconscious of his greatness.

Leonardo da Vinci, his humble prototype, doubtless thought of him; and so "I wrote Leonardo's epigraph, 'Thus hath nature disposed me,' on the title-page of my first book." And the world's greatest musician, Richard Wagner, was the humble John the Baptist of this new Messiah (before Dowie), prophesying that in D'Annunzio (Stelio) would be found the marriage of Art with Life!

"If the man who built the Festival Theatre at Bayreuth were present, he would applaud the harmony which he himself has announced"!

O Stelio! Would that we could think you were joking! But no! "Stelio smiled as he noticed to what extent those who approached him were steeped in his own essence." And D'Annunzio has coined the word "D'Annunzians" for those who follow in his footsteps, as one might of the followers of Another say "Christians"!

"You exclaimed 'look at your pomegranates!' To you and to those who love me they can never be anything but *mine* (Stelio's). To you and to them the idea of my person is indissolubly bound up with the fruit that I have chosen for an emblem, and have overcharged with mysterious significances more numerous than its own grains." In the ages of classic Greece, Hyacinthus and Narcissus would have been types of him, he says, "and even in our own times there are a few agile and highly endowed spirits capable of understanding all the meaning and enjoying all the savour of my invention."

"Would this please Stelio Effrena? You don't know how many men of the younger generation are now asking themselves the same question when they consider the aspects of their inner life. . . . . He had brought about in himself the intimate marriage of Art and Life, and he

thus found in the depths of his own substance a spring of perennial harmonies. . . . . Images and impetuous music were being generated within him, as if by the magic of some instantaneous fertilization. And the unexpected flood of that abundance was filling his spirit with joy."

Nor with Stelio (D'Annunzio) is this an occasional exaltation, while with Foscarina, though it is true that she is the greatest of actresses and most highly gifted, yet, poor woman!—"it was only given her to prolong such a state of intensity by a supreme effort, while she knew that he moved in it as easily as if it were his natural mode of being, ceaselessly enjoying the miraculous world of his own, that he renewed by an act of continual creation," for "he had brought about in himself the intimate marriage of Art with Life, and he thus found in the depths of his own substance a spring of perennial harmonies, ... the continual genesis of a finer life wherein all appearances were transfigured as in a magic mirror." Ah! Stelio Effrena, alias Gabbrielè D'Annunzio! You have many gifts and many senses, but you have not the gift of humour, nor a sense of the ridiculous!

Diverse judgments on D'Annunzio.

Though so much has been written in praise and in depreciation of D'Annunzio's writings, yet judgments as to his ethical and æsthetic principles will be most diverse.

That D'Annunzio has borrowed much from

Peladan's novels is certain: whole pages are so closely imitated as to amount to a translation; the general plan, too, the æsthetical theory, is at times appropriated with scarcely an attempt at disguising the theft. D'Annunzio, forced to admit the fact, explains it by saying that he likes to take his start from another man's writing, the better to swing himself at full speed along his own career. In this practice he is countenanced by the musicians, who have often developed their greatest compositions out of the notes of a popular melody.

His art justifies his plagiarism.

Molière replied to a similar charge, "*Je prends mon bien où je le trouve,*" thus asserting the right of a genius to avail himself of all the elements of beauty, and to convert them into the substance of his own living performance. Only we expect him to prove his right by transforming this foreign matter into a compact whole, stamped with the mark of his own greater genius. This D'Annunzio has done, and so powerfully as to justify his plagiarism.

Immorality of D'Annunzio considered.

The chief charge against D'Annunzio's novels is their immorality. Yet Giovanni Episcopo murdering his wife's lover; Tullio Hermil destroying his wife's illegitimate offspring; Aurispa forcing his mistress to follow him in death; or the amatorial exploits of Andrea Sperelli, are not much darker sins than we have accepted in novels by other writers. Husbands

vindicating their honour, and philosophers preferring death to life, have been praised as virtuous men; fickle lovers have met with lenient judges. Why then are we so shocked by the same acts when committed by D'Annunzio's personages?

It consists in misconstruing the moral law.

Doubtless our moral repugnance is here stirred, as has been our critical sense, by the discord between the man's soul and his actions and environment. Because the psyche and the outer manifestation of the individual are diversely evolved. They are of our times, these creatures of his fiction, and yet they have only the moral development of fourteenth century people. Tullio Hermil, a feudal lord ruling over his vassals, master of their souls and bodies, and persuaded of his rights, might have killed the little bastard without great offence. His wife's submission would not have been repugnant, and his return to her, which she receives as a return to favour, would not have shocked us. But that a man who has had our opportunities for moral development should thus misconstrue the moral law is monstrous.

In falsifying life.

Yes, D'Annunzio's novels are immoral! The novel which by its solution and treatment of subjects, by choosing the nasty things, and then, investing them with an artificial intellectual and emotional value, falsifies our views of life and enervates character, is *ipso facto* immoral—

equally immoral with those novels which also falsify life by persuading us that no nasty sides, no pathological cases, exist. The sin in both cases is the sin of disproportion. And the sense of proportion is the supreme gift of Art and of Life!

In presenting half truths.

D'Annunzio's women are never man's help-meets; usually they are merely his accomplices or his temptation. These half truths are the greatest of lies, and false views of life are immoral views of life.

And in generalizing upon accidentals.

The supreme objection to D'Annunzio's work is not that his characters do immoral things and think immoral thoughts, but that he presents as a literary work, that is to say, something which we by a necessary psychological process instinctively accept as a generalization, that which is in fact a mere accidental. Hence he gives us a false impression of life. He gives an intellectual value to certain facts which they do not merit. He dwells on physical details with which the imagination has small legitimate interest. Especially does this apply to the examination of particular kinds of evil which are altogether abnormal. The world is not chiefly made up of refuse-heaps, dung-hills, and hospitals, even in Rome!

Again! D'Annunzio is the apostle of Individualism. Instead of offering us a new and wider view of life and its privileges, he revives

He is the apostle of Individualism.

a discredited theory of the relation of the individual to his social environment. The ego worship extolled in his pages and characteristic of his novels has been discarded by the best thought of our age. Social obligation and universal solidarity compel the assent of our intelligence. We know that no man liveth wholly to himself. D'Annunzio appeals to feelings that once controlled us, and that still sometimes tempt us to actions for which we would fain find excuse. Yet even when he appeals to us, we realize that it is an appeal to our unworthy self, an appeal to "the old man" which we hoped was dead; and for this revelation of our egoism we are not grateful.

And denies the supreme right of Society.

For the human conscience is ever evolving towards larger and more enlightened ideals of justice, towards clearer conceptions of the bonds that unite all humanity. We are better than our forefathers in matters pertaining to public life, and in both public and private morality. And we now know that the supreme law is the right of Society and not the pleasure of the individual. Now when D'Annunzio would seduce us to recant all that we have so painfully and laboriously acquired, when he declares that we have toiled in vain and missed the right path, we know that it is he that is in the wrong; that instead of being a prophet and a leader to higher ways of living and nobler views of life, he

would drag us back into the night from which we have so painfully emerged.

His fame rests on talent and poetic power.

It is only his talent and poetic power that have secured for him even a hearing. If D'Annunzio's fame is ever destroyed it will be because these feet of clay have not been able to uphold the splendid work of art.

His presentation of love unworthy and false.

But D'Annunzio has sinned more deeply in the unworthiness of his presentation of love. He believes himself to be the poet of love—pagan and voluptuous love. And yet there is just one chord wanting to his lyre, one series of emotions which he does not know how to translate. He is not a lover.

Not one of those incarnations of the author's heart and nerves is really attached to the woman he desires, or, rather, whom he thinks he desires.

Andrea Sperelli, spurring his phantasy by the evocation of past volupty, or stimulating his senses by that abnormal debauch of possessing two women in one, is a pathological case of sadism rather than a true lover. Impotence or inexperience will equally rush to such imaginings. To a healthy mind, to a normal nervous system, to a man or a woman who has been wise enough and fortunate enough to live according to the great and good law of nature, all these highly spiced and unwholesome extravagances reveal only a perversion.

In the *Triumph of Death* are found the most

"Triumph of Death" betrays D'Annunzio's insensibility to true love.

probant evidences of D'Annunzio's insensibility to the natural feelings of affection, and even to the healthy craving of natural appetite. This most carefully written novel is not, like the *Child of Volupty,* thrown like a defiant challenge merely to stun his readers with the boldness of his attack on every principle, and as an exhibition of his unequalled skill in word-painting; it is a confession of faith. But the penitent, being unskilled in the art of self-examination, reveals more and less than he really meant to say.

Thus when Giorgio Aurispa details the lustful caresses he bestows on his mistress, we are impressed with the coldness underlying these debauched pleasures. Far from loving Ippolita, he has not for her even the pity and commiseration that a normal human being would have for his fellow creatures. "She sobbed wildly, like a child, and this instead of exciting pity only irritated her lover. He had never seen her weep so violently, with her eyelids swollen and red, her mouth convulsed. She appeared ugly and silly, and he was sorry for having bothered to save her." Later he indulges in the strange hallucination of seeing her drowned and of imagining "the tokens of grief he would exhibit to the public, and his own attitude when confronted with her corpse washed ashore by the tide."

His instinctive cruelty.

On another occasion he starts from a simple joke to this cruel vision. "Cleopatra's word to the messenger, 'And here my bluest veins to kiss!' Ippolita held up her two hands to him. 'Kiss,' said she. He caught one of them, and made a feint with his knife as if to cut off her wrist. 'Cut away,' she said, fearlessly, 'I won't move.' . . . . He placed the two hands together as if he would sever them both at a stroke. The picture rose in complete detail before him. On the marble threshold of a doorway darkened by shadow and expectation appeared the woman who was to die, her arms extended, and from her wrists, where the pulse-arteries had been severed, two crimson jets spurted and throbbed. Between these two fountains her face slowly assumed a ghastly pallor, her hollow eyes filled with infinite mystery, the wraith of an ineffable word hovered around the set lips. Suddenly the fountains ceased to flow, the bloodless body fell backwards in the shadow."

Besides this complete and conscious evocation of a cruel sight, how many wanton hints of this blending of cruelty and lust in all his novels!

Though in *The Virgins* we are less offended by the cruelty of Cantelmo's behaviour, because of that peculiar atmosphere of unreality pervading the book, and the allegorical meaning of the victim, yet the pleasure he takes in torturing Massimilla with the evocation of the regrets she

is sure to feel when shut up in a convent is more offensive, perhaps, than any ruder evil-doing. The sight of her beautiful face wincing under the harmonious words that prophesy future pain and inflict exquisite torture seems to electrify the eloquence of the speaker and delight his cruel soul.

Indeed, when this cruelty towards the beloved one is not clearly expressed it is implied, the moral attitude of the lover being often that of a skilled fencer watching the play of his foe, and chuckling over the success of his own well-aimed thrusts.

His voluptuousness is artificial.

It is as evident, but not so easily explainable, that the voluptuous sensations so plentifully and complacently rehearsed in D'Annunzio's novels are rather an artificial display of consummate talent than the genuine excess of a sensuous temperament.

The subject is so delicate that we only suggest our meaning. Those who have kissed, in earnest and trusting love, or in the passionate plentitude of volupty, will detect the difference between such endearments and the artificial mannerism of the caresses exchanged between Andrea Sperelli and his several mistresses, or the refined subtlety of Aurispa, stimulating his exhausted desire by the spectacle of bodily and mental wretchedness. Compared to such revolting dilletantism, to such unnatural, cold-blooded

research, the dissolute characters in fiction appear attractive. Manon Lescaut, with all her impulsive cravings, is never so distasteful as these artists of corruption, shamming perversion as others have shammed purity.

D'Annunzio fails to understand woman.

If D'Annunzio fails to understand either the philosophy or the poetry and mystery and religion of love, it is equally true that he does not understand woman. He has devoted all his marvellous powers to the presentation of the "sex-problem," and yet he has failed to understand the sphinx-like ambiguities and never-to-be-satisfied longings of women, because his vision is obscured and distorted by his own egoism. We see through D'Annunzio's eyes and feel with D'Annunzio's senses, instead of seeing and feeling with those of his characters.

Limitations of his philosophy concerning woman.

Believing that vitality and sexuality are one, and are strictly localized, it never occurs to D'Annunzio that the desires of the flesh are not always the mainsprings of a woman's life. The modern woman both palpitates and reflects; D'Annunzio's women only palpitate. The men in D'Annunzio's novels (barbarians or decadents) find in the women that which they wish to find. Of course this is not the real woman, and yet it is not altogether false; so powerful is the instinct in woman to desire to be what man wishes her to be.

D'Annunzio utterly fails to understand

woman as Mother; he disdains this phase. Yet this creative and fostering instinct and impulse is so large a part of woman's nature and is closely connected with her love. What does D'Annunzio know of the longing of the woman to bear her lover's child?

Foscarina his only real lover.

Though the words "love" and "volupty" are so often repeated in D'Annunzio's novels, there is only one of these creatures of his imagination who really and sincerely loves and desires; this is Foscarina.

Here a human heart throbs with human love, a healthy and beautiful body quivers with passionate desire. For her we feel that pity or admiration, that disapproval or that envy, which we feel for our fellow creatures. She is such as we are—a compound of good and bad instincts. She is a sinner, but she is not an abject slave to her own or to her lover's lust. The greatness of that love which has been her undoing will give her strength for sacrifice. The battle between her dual natures is noble, even when the lower nature seems triumphant; it is dramatic and it is true.

A true human being.

D'Annunzio the foremost novelist of modern Italy.

To resume, D'Annunzio to-day holds the foremost rank among the novelists of Italy. There are few Italian romances which do not evince something of his influence. Writers young and old have surrendered to him. They imitate his

subjects, his style; they imitate even the imitations and the poetic tricks of "the master."

His descriptive power and capacity for sensation.

That D'Annunzio possesses a genius far higher than that of a simple phrase-maker must be loyally conceded. It is not simply that he possesses a marvellous ability to describe his sensations. He has also an unsurpassed capacity for sensation itself—sensation of a certain character. And the reality and beauty of these sensations is D'Annunzio's field—his scope and his limitation. He believes himself an idealist; he is in fact a materialist. He believes that he gives body and expression to things spiritual, but in truth he only idealizes things material, for his sensations are localized; he does not respond with his whole being. The body, the body, the flesh and the sensations of the flesh—this has appealed to him as the most marvellous thing in the universe, to which all else must contribute and interpret.

He misses the spiritual

To these lesser sensations he is keenly alive. He can describe a mouth and he can describe a kiss, except for its spiritual significance and communion; he can describe an ankle, he can describe a hand, so that there is nothing lacking. He perceives, too, all that is in a sunset, save God and the soul; to these he is insensible.

D'Annunzio regards the Renaissance as "the enlightened period," and adopting the theory of that age, his measure of the value of beauty

is the force of its physical action upon himself. By the same token he considers that moral qualities are variable things, to be judged by æsthetic rules. "Life in happiness" is his message to men. To him Beauty and Joy are the supreme good, and marvellously he sees them, though the beauty and joy are often perverse. Naturally, he has a horror of pain, and finds in it no lesson, and in its patient endurance no nobility. "Joy," he says, "is the most certain means of knowledge offered to us by nature, and he who has suffered much is less wise than he who has much enjoyed." Hence his erotic yearnings for "the fulness of life" which "conceals joy as the grape still in flower conceals the wine."

Beauty and Joy his supreme good.

A great artist, but a little man; great ambition, immense talent, stupendous vanity; indefatigable worker, capable of everything save real nobility or real philosophy; without humility or faith; his fire blazes, but gives no warmth; his arid heart encourages only admirers and slaves. Though his glittering phrases often attain to splendid description, they contain no solution of life's problems. Attempting to show us all the varied phases of the heart, he lacks facility of mental metamorphosis and fails in the analysis of characters which do not reflect some phase of his own personality. Hence his novels are states

A great artist, conditioned by his own littleness.

of mind, novels of temperament and not novels of character. His work is not virile, he thinks through his nerves—this is characteristic of feminism, but a male-feminist is an anomaly. The shades of difference between different virtues is more delicate than the violent contrasts between different vices, and harder to depict. D'Annunzio has chosen the more facile opportunity.

His novels are works of temperament.

Of the tragic beauty, the sad poetry of human destiny, he only gives us superficial understanding. He knows life's fitful fever, but he does not know life's real richness and serenity. He knows life's storms, but not life's calms; life's weakness, but not life's strength. He shows us beauty, but it is hectic beauty. D'Annunzio is ignorant of the majesty of the human soul, of the sublimity of human existence, and of the Powers of the World to Come; consequently this apostle of Joy, Art, and Beauty never feels true joy, never attains the highest art, never knows the true soul of beauty.

He has no real conception of life.

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